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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A STUDY OF THE CAROLS
OF MANUSCRIPT ARCH SELDEN B26

by



DOREEN RUTH WAKEFIELD

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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The undersigned certify that they have read,
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for
acceptance, a thesis entitled

A STUDY OF THE CAROLS
OF MANUSCRIPT ARCH SELDEN B26

submitted by Doreen Ruth Wakefield in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music.

ABSTRACT

This study is a description of the mid-fifteenth-century polyphonic carol as a genre, illustrated by the thirty carols found in the manuscript Arch Selden B26 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Chapter One contains a brief description of that part of the manuscript containing the carols; a review of the various opinions concerning its date and place of origin is made, and the most significant correspondences with other carol manuscripts are shown.

The formal structure of the carol is investigated in Chapter Two. An appropriate definition of the carol is established, on the basis of its structure. The component parts of the form: burden, verse, and chorus, are examined, and their interrelationships, both textual and musical, are shown.

Two opposing views of the origin of the carol are discussed in Chapter Three. That the carol derived from carole, the French ring-dance, is the position held mainly by literary historians while musicologists generally support the belief that the carols were written specifically for singing in church processions. The contributions of the Franciscan friars towards the development of the English

carol are considered. It is shown that the carol, while having a distinctly popular nature, is not, as is often believed, folk song.

The musical style of the carols is examined in Chapter Four. Mention is made of the typical triple metre, the cross rhythms, the characteristics of melodic and harmonic structure, the style of part-writing, the types of cadences, and the use of modes. Suggestions are made concerning the treatment of voices and instruments in performance.

The Appendix gives an account of a performance of eleven of the carols from the Selden manuscript, in addition to other medieval music and dramatic readings. A tape recording of the performance is included.

FRONTISPIECE

HAIL, MARY, FULL OF GRACE

MS. Arch Selden B26, f. 23

The holigoste is to the Gent

Hail Mary full of grace: madder in mynte

ffor the father oypotent. that is god & yn ye Gent. While ye angel sende Ave

Whan the angel Ave by name
glessed a blode to god & name. I threke the Viru of the Virgite.

maye have bothe god & manne
So bothe the gospel of syn John.
god & man is made al one. I god in psonys thre.

And the prophete Jeremy
tellet in his prophete. I ffor us praye upon a tre.

apoke we praye for y gyante
And in the quene y plume. I in the sonde of galile.

Whan y have that founte.
maye founte us of the blys.
Gley as the comys domine. I pray for us p' chaunte.

of p' au hanc y done a mye.
Ave
hail blessed Mary. praye god for us.
a' & praye god for us. praye god for us.

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Gloria tibi ay and bliss:
God unto his grace he us wiss,
The rent of heaven that we not miss,
Both all and some.

--MS. Arch Selden B26, f. 7

INTRODUCTION

The manuscript Arch Selden B26 is one of a large group of manuscripts and books forming the Selden collection in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The thirty English and Latin carols of this manuscript are representative of the medieval polyphonic carol, a genre identified by its form, which appeared in England about 1420 and disappeared soon after 1500.

The entire corpus of extant medieval carols has been transcribed into modern notation by John Stevens in Mediaeval Carols, Volume IV of Musica Britannica, published for the Royal Musical Association by Stainer and Bell in 1958. Reference is made to this edition throughout the present paper.

Since the art of music must exist in sound, the carols were brought to life through a performance which is described in the Appendix. The concert is preserved on tape recording.

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

John Selden was born on the coast of Sussex in 1584. The son of a violinist, he entered Oxford at fourteen. During his life he built a firm reputation as a scholar, parliamentarian, antiquarian and man of integrity. It is not known how he acquired the music manuscript. His library, however, was known to be large and varied. Five years after his death,

the whole collection, comprising more than 8000 volumes were conveyed to Oxford, one of the terms of the gift being that they should be for ever kept together, and in a distinct body, with the title of, Mr. Selden's Library. The Books arrived in September, 1659, and are preserved in a separate apartment of the Bodleian Library.¹

The present manuscript bears catalogue number B26 of the Archives of John Selden.²

Appearance and Contents

The manuscript Arch Selden B26 is a volume of parchment and paper, ten and one-quarter by seven and one-eighth inches in size. There are 135 folios. The music

¹The Table-Talk of John Selden, Biographical Preface and Notes by S. W. Singer (2nd ed.; London: John Russell Smith, 1856), p. lxxiv.

²Hereinafter the manuscript will be referred to as Selden.

is written in full-black notation with scattered full-red and void-red notes; the initials are in blue and red; the texts of some of the refrain-lines are in red. A few leaves of Part I are stained.

The volume consists of five unrelated manuscripts, "apparently bound together after they came into the possession of the library, and bearing figures which seem to show that they were part of a large number of unbound pieces which came in the Selden collection."³

Of the five manuscripts which comprise the volume, only the first contains carols. Part I, made of parchment, consists of thirty-one folios, numbered from three to thirty-three; one and two are binder's paper flyleaves. Included in this first part are thirty English, Latin, and macaronic carols, mixed indiscriminately with fifteen Latin antiphons from the Sarum Processional, all but one in praise of the Virgin, and other sacred and secular songs. All are set to music for two or three voices.

No composers' names are given in the manuscript; however, those of three of the antiphons have been identified by correspondences in continental manuscripts. The

³E. W. B. Nicholson, in his introduction to Early Bodleian Music, ed. by Sir John Stainer (2 vols.; London: Novello and Company, Limited, 1901), p. xx.

composers are Dunstable, Leonel, and Plomer.⁴

Photographic facsimiles of Part I appear in the first volume of Early Bodleian Music, plates 37-97, and transcriptions in the second volume, pages 74-180. The English texts of Part I are printed by Frederick Morgan Padelford.⁵

The Early English Carols, Richard Leighton Greene's authoritative edition of 474 carol texts, with introduction and notes, appeared in 1935,⁶ followed in 1962 by his book, A Selection of English Carols,⁷ containing others not previously published. Twenty-three of the carols from Selden appear in The Early English Carols, and an additional one in A Selection of English Carols. Two carols from Selden having only one verse are omitted from Greene's collections, although he includes other one-verse carols.

⁴Manfred F. Bukofzer, "Review of Medieval Polyphony in the Bodleian Library by Dom Anselm Hughes," Journal of the American Musicological Society, V (Spring, 1952), 56. The compositions and their other locations are as follows: Ave regina (f. 5^v) by Leonel, other versions in the Trent Codices and Bologna, Liceo Mus. Q 15; Beata mater (f. 6^r) by Dunstable, other versions in Trent and Modena, Est. lat. 471; and Tota pulcra es (f. 31^v) by Plomer, other versions in Trent and Modena, Est. lat. 471.

⁵"English Songs in Manuscript Selden B. 26," Anglia, XXXVI, N. F. XXIV (1912), 86-115.

⁶(Oxford: Clarendon Press), hereinafter referred to as EEC.

⁷(Oxford: Clarendon Press), hereinafter referred to as SEC.

The four Latin carols (cantilenae) in Selden are not printed by Greene, since he has restricted his collections to English carols.

In contrast to the large number of known carol texts, the music of only about 120 carols has been preserved. All are included in Mediaeval Carols.⁸ Those from Selden are Nos. 15 to 42, and 12A and 13A in the appendix.

In his introduction to Early Bodleian Music, Nicholson states that he finds nine different hands in the carol texts;⁹ Padelford agrees with him,¹⁰ but Greene adds a tenth.¹¹ Eleven music writers are recognized by Nicholson; Padelford traces only eight. Both Nicholson and Padelford list the carols which, in their opinion, were copied by each writer. Rossell Hope Robbins sees that "the main body of the carols was written by one scribe for the words and by another scribe for the music."¹² Some of the writers were probably copyists of both words and music.

⁸Ed. by John Stevens as Vol. IV of Musica Britannica, published for the Royal Musical Association (London: Stainer and Bell Ltd, 1952, revised 1958). Throughout this study the numbering of the carols corresponds to that of Mediaeval Carols.

⁹Pp. xx - xxi.

¹⁰"English Songs," p. 81.

¹¹SEC, p. 176.

¹²Early English Christmas Carols (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 86.

Date

The date of the manuscript has been the subject of much argument.

The earliest attempt to date the manuscript was apparently made by the antiquary Dr. Philip Bliss, sub-librarian of the Bodleian Library between 1822 and 1828. On one of the flyleaves at the beginning of the volume he wrote "circ: 1440."¹³

Underneath, the Rev. Henry Octavius Coxe, a subsequent librarian of the Bodleian Library, wrote "1420 see fol. 16, Agincourt & the King not dead".¹⁴ His reasoning was probably that outlined by Nicholson, as follows:

In the middle of the collection is a song of thanksgiving for Agincourt. It was composed after the entry of the French prisoners into London, which I suppose was at Henry's entry on November 23, 1415. But the King is obviously still alive . . . Henry died in 1422.¹⁵

Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, director and principal librarian of the British Museum and formerly keeper of its manuscripts, was consulted in 1897. On a study of the facsimiles, he dated the Selden manuscript not earlier than 1450-55.¹⁶

¹³ Early Bodleian Music, I, p. xxii.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Nicholson sets the date at approximately 1454, reasoning that the Agincourt carol could have been copied after the death of Henry V, but unlikely after 1455 in which England lost all its possessions in France except Calais, "and the singing or copying of the song would have been something very like a mockery." He cites a Latin antiphon, Miles Christi gloriose, a petition for civic peace in England, as corresponding to the state of affairs at Christmas, 1453.¹⁷

Padelford, however, sees this Latin antiphon as "general in application, rather than specific", and of no advantage in fixing the date. He points out that a song may well be composed and sung a century before it is recorded in a manuscript, and that a legendary song such as the Agincourt carol would continue to be sung "long after its applicability has ceased."¹⁸ On the basis of the character of the musical notes and the orthography, he places the manuscript between 1570 and 1575, which Robbins calls "a slip",¹⁹ and Greene considers "an obvious error", setting the date at the middle of the fifteenth century.²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid., p. xxiii.

¹⁸ "English Songs," p. 84.

¹⁹ "Middle English Carols as Processional Hymns," Studies in Philology, LVI (October, 1959), 560.

²⁰ EEC, pp. 335-36.

Provenance

In his efforts to trace the origin of the manuscript, Nicholson observes:

Our music was almost certainly written in a monastery: this we see when we consider the number of hands concerned in producing it and the character of the words. . . . Where except in a monastery or house of minstrels would so many skilled music-writers be found at one time? And a house of minstrels is absolutely excluded by the fact that there is not from beginning to end of the collection one single word of love.²¹

Bertram Schofield sees the Chapel Royal, that is, the college of St. George's, Windsor, as more likely than any monastery or establishment of music to have housed the requisite number of music writers. In support of his opinion he points to the inclusion in the manuscript of both the Agincourt song, extolling the king, and the antiphon Miles Christi gloriose which he assumes is in honor of St. George, the patron saint of England, invoking him to end the existing civil discord.²²

Greene rejects this argument, pointing out that the Latin antiphon taken by Schofield to be in honor of St. George actually celebrates Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, "a powerful Yorkshireman who rebelled against the crown and

²¹Early Bodleian Music, I, xxi.

²²"A Newly Discovered 15th-Century Manuscript of the English Chapel Royal - Part I," The Musical Quarterly, XXXII (October, 1946), 525.

was beheaded as a traitor."²³ Greene sees neither the Chapel Royal nor St. George's, Windsor, as likely places of origin for Selden.

The same antiphon, Miles Christi gloriose, provides the clue to an alternative view of the location of the manuscript. Frank Ll. Harrison notes that this antiphon is unique in the collection in that it is not in honor of the Virgin, but of Thomas of Lancaster, who was executed by Edward II in 1322.

Thomas's brother Henry recovered the family titles and estates two years later and in 1330 began the foundation of St. Mary Newarke Hospital and College. He encouraged the popular devotion to the memory of his brother and made efforts to have him canonized as the martyr of Pontefract. The canonization did not take place, but the devotion continued, and this antiphon is part of a rhymed office in honour of 'Saint' Thomas. Newarke College is a likely place for such an antiphon to have been sung in the fifteenth century, and it is conceivable that the manuscript originated there.²⁴

Harrison adds,

If so, the first line of the carol 'Alleluia: A newe work is come on hond' [No. 30] had an extra appropriateness.²⁵

Attempts to locate the manuscript have been made

²³"Two Medieval Musical Manuscripts: Egerton 3307 and Some University of Chicago Fragments," Journal of the American Musicological Society, VII (Spring, 1954), 4.

²⁴Music in Medieval Britain (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 300.

²⁵Ibid., p. 300, n. 4.

by a study of the dialect. Padelford states, "The songs are written in the Southern dialect, as the inflections make clear."²⁶ Nicholson agrees, adding, "That the words were not written in the North or Midlands, but in the South, is evident from the use of -eth as a plural ending."²⁷

Greene admits that "such traces of dialectal forms as are found in the English suggest a connection with the Southern area."²⁸ He adds, "Northernisms are strikingly absent from the carols in the Selden Ms."²⁹ Greene notices that, later in the fifteenth century but sometime after its first writing, a Northern scribe has added a stanza to the end of Hail, Mary, full of grace, No. 31,³⁰ and, on the same leaf, has drawn a crude sketch of a cock.³¹

A cock, in the later fifteenth century, was the very widely known and frequently depicted rebus or badge of John Alcock, successively Bishop of Rochester, Worcester, and Ely, joint Lord Chancellor of England, Master of the Rolls, founder of Jesus College, Cambridge, and of the grammar school at Hull. Alcock was notoriously fond of applying his rebus wherever possible,

²⁶"English Songs," p. 79.

²⁷Early Bodleian Music, I, xxi.

²⁸"Two Medieval Musical Manuscripts," p. 13.

²⁹Ibid., p. 21.

³⁰Stevens does not include this stanza which is printed in SEC, footnote, p. 113.

³¹See Frontispiece.

and it is, of course, the principal charge and crest of the arms of Jesus College. It could hardly indicate anyone else. . . . The whole MS. of carols is earlier than Alcock's episcopate (1476-86); we may conjecture that it came into his possession and that he added to the carol, probably from memory, another stanza known to him.³²

Greene notes, however, that the cock in Alcock's rebus was usually drawn standing on a globe, to depict the "all" part of his name, whereas there is no globe in this sketch.³³

The Northern spelling of the added stanza is appropriate to Alcock who was born and educated at Beverley. The language used in the other texts is that of Worcester, an abbey where there was much carolling. Greene concludes that the manuscript is from Worcester. He adds:

The MS. has a very high proportion of carols and Latin songs to the Virgin, and it may well have been connected with the boys' choir of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary in the nave. In 1478 Alcock endowed this chapel with £100 for masses and antiphons and responds for his own soul and those of his parents and benefactors. (Ivor Atkins, The Early Occupants of the Office of Organist and Master of the Choristers of . . . Worcester, Worcestershire Historical Society, 1918, pp. 2-8).³⁴

The "speed-the-plough" carol, No. 12A, also points to Worcester. This carol, says Greene, "would be highly appropriate to Worcester Abbey, which had a number of ag-

³²SEC, pp. 176-77.

³³"Two Medieval Musical Manuscripts," p. 17.

³⁴SEC, p. 177.

ricultural manors and much business with plough-land, ploughmen, and oxen."³⁵

At the top of Y-blessed be that Lord, No. 40, has been written the name Childe, which may refer to the composer, William Child.³⁶ Greene, however, points out that

since composers' names in general are not given by this MS., it is more probably a note of ownership. The Childe family were important tenants of Worcester Abbey, and in the early sixteenth century Prior William More entrusted much business to Richard Childe and gave him many rewards.³⁷

Another carol, I pray you all, No. 15, is marked "quod J. D." which many writers have taken to imply the composer John Dunstable. Opinions vary as to whether the music is in a style used by Dunstable. "As a canon and prebendary of Hereford Dunstable could easily have had contact with Worcester Abbey."³⁸

An explanation for the close similarities between Selden and another carol manuscript, Egerton 3307, is furnished by Greene: "If Egerton 3307 is correctly assigned to Meaux Abbey or its neighbourhood, Alcock, re-visiting Hull and his native Beverley, may have been an

³⁵Ibid., p. 244.

³⁶See Music in Medieval Britain, pp. 420 and 456.

³⁷SEC, p. 178.

³⁸Ibid.

agent of the transmission.³⁹

Correspondences with Other Manuscripts

The Selden manuscript is one of four surviving manuscripts containing fifteenth-century carols in polyphonic settings. These manuscripts show much interconnection; of the thirty carols in Selden, seventeen appear, more or less varied, in another musical manuscript.

The oldest of the polyphonic manuscripts is a vellum roll in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, MS.0. 3. 58. It contains thirteen English carols with music from the first half of the fifteenth century.⁴⁰ Its dialect is East Anglian. Carols in Selden which are included in the Trinity Roll are Nos. 16, 23, 27, 29, 31, 38, and 42.⁴¹

The recently discovered British Museum Manuscript Egerton 3307 consists of two parts; in the first part are liturgical compositions of the Sarum Processional for the services of Holy Week, and in the second, thirty-two anonymous sacred and secular carols and cantilenae. This manu-

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰These carols have been transcribed by J. A. Fuller Maitland and published, with added vocal parts by W. S. Rockstro, as English Carols of the Fifteenth Century (London: The Leadenhall Press, [1891]).

⁴¹Fuller descriptions of the manuscripts are in EEC, pp. 325-49, SEC, pp. 170-84, and Mediaeval Carols, p. 125.

script is dated between 1430 and 1450, about the same time as Selden, with which it has many similarities of notation and musical style. The place of origin, monastic or royal, is the subject of much discussion; Greene points to the Cistercian Abbey of Meaux near Beverley, Yorkshire;⁴² Manfred Bukofzer⁴³ and Gustave Reese⁴⁴ agree but Harrison rejects this view on liturgical grounds;⁴⁵ Schofield⁴⁶ and Stevens,⁴⁷ supported by Gwynn S. McPeck,⁴⁸ attribute the manuscript to the college of St. George's, Windsor. The English texts of the carols are not in The Early English Carols but are edited by Greene in A Selection of English Carols. Bukofzer has provided an analysis of the music of the entire manuscript.⁴⁹ Carols appearing in both Egerton and Selden are Nos. 15, 28, 34, 35, and 37.

⁴²"Two Medieval Musical Manuscripts."

⁴³Studies in Medieval & Renaissance Music (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950), p. 114.

⁴⁴Music in the Renaissance (Rev. ed.; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1959), p. 764.

⁴⁵Music in Medieval Britain, p. 275.

⁴⁶"A Newly Discovered Manuscript," p. 514.

⁴⁷Mediaeval Carols, p. 125.

⁴⁸The British Museum Manuscript Egerton 3307 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 7-14.

⁴⁹Studies, Chapter IV, "Holy-Week Music and Carols at Meaux Abbey," pp. 113-75.

The "Ritson" Manuscript, British Museum Additional MS. 5665, contains forty-four English and Latin carols, in addition to masses, motets, and secular songs. "The composers include Sir Thomas Pakke, otherwise unknown, Turges, John Cornysh, Henry Petyre, John Wythe, Richard Smert, and John Trouluffe."⁵⁰ The manuscript is usually attributed to the West Country and dated about 1500.⁵¹ It was presented to the British Museum by Joseph Ritson in 1795.⁵² Bukofzer reports that the Ritson manuscript

stands apart as a provincial collection from the latter part of the 15th century and shows no musical concordances with any of the earlier manuscripts, though it includes several earlier carol poems in new musical settings. The older repertory was apparently rapidly displaced by new compositions written in a more intricate style.⁵³

Robbins adds:

⁵⁰SEC, p. 175. Smert was rector of Plymtree, near Exeter, from 1435 to 1477.

⁵¹But Robbins dates the carols of this manuscript between 1450 and 1470 (Early English Christmas Carols, p. 86) and Catherine Keyes Miller sets the date at the end of the second third of the fifteenth century in "The Early English Carol," Renaissance News, III (Winter, 1950), 61.

⁵²Catherine Miller has provided a transcription and commentary on this manuscript in "A Fifteenth Century Record of English Choir Repertory: B. M. Add. MS. 5665" (2 vols.; unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1948).

⁵³"Review of Mediaeval Carols, ed. by John Stevens," Journal of the American Musicological Society, VII (Spring, 1954), 63.

The settings are generally more ornate than those of the other polyphonic manuscripts, and usually have repeated burdens.⁵⁴

The following carols in Selden are found in another musical setting in the Ritson manuscript: Nos. 15, 17, 20, 21, and 26.

Two carols in Selden are found with music in other manuscripts. The manuscript Ashmole 1393 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford contains a version of the cantilena No. 37, as well as an English song and two carol texts.⁵⁵ No. 25, with different music, has been found on a flyleaf of Cambridge University Library manuscript Ll. I. 11.⁵⁶

The texts of many of the carols in Selden are found in several medieval manuscripts. Among the most important of these are Oxford, Balliol MS.354, the commonplace book of Richard Hill, a London grocer (Nos. 17 and 23); Oxford, Bodleian MS.Eng. poet E 1 (Nos. 15 and 26); British Museum, Sloane MS.2593 (Nos. 21 and 23); Oxford, Bodleian MS. Douce 302 (No. 27); and Bridgewater Corporation Muniments, 123 (No. 20).⁵⁷

⁵⁴Early English Christmas Carols, p. 86.

⁵⁵Facsimile and transcriptions are in Early Bodleian Music, I, No. xxviii, and II, 61-65.

⁵⁶See Manfred F. Bukofzer, "Some Sources of 15th Century English Music," Renaissance News, II (Winter, 1949), 65-67.

⁵⁷The above manuscripts are described in EEC, pp. 325-49. See also Robbins' discussion of these and other carol manuscripts in his article "Middle English Carols as Processional Hymns."

The text of No. 31 is also in a book printed in the sixteenth century by Richard Kele, Christmas carolles newly Inprynted, now in the Huntington Library.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Kele's book has been reproduced in facsimile as part of Edward Bliss Reed's Christmas Carols Printed in the Sixteenth Century (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1932).

CHAPTER II

FORMAL STRUCTURE

Definition of "Carol"

The variety of meanings which are implied by the term "carol" will be illustrated by some examples of current definitions.

The opening lines of The Oxford Book of Carols state that "carols are songs with a religious impulse that are simple, hilarious, popular, and modern."¹ John Julian defines a carol simply as "a song of joy originally accompanying a dance."² The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines a carol as "a kind of song affiliated with dancing and associated with the seasons of the year, especially Christmas."³ Percy A. Scholes designates a carol as "a religious seasonal song, of joyful character, in the vernacular and sung by the common people."⁴ The popular use of the term "Christmas carol", with its far-reaching social and senti-

¹Preface by Percy Dearmer (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. v.

²A Dictionary of Hymnology (5th ed.; London: John Murray, 1925), p. 205.

³Frank Stewart Howes, "Carol," 1968, IV, 942.

⁴The Oxford Companion to Music (9th ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 154.

mental implications, appears questionable, and Grove's Dictionary, without attempting to define a carol, warns that "the important fact to remember in the first place is that a carol is not necessarily a secular Yuletide or half-sacred Christmas song."⁵

The diversity of meanings attached to the word "carol" is due in part to widely differing views on the derivation of the term. The Old French carole, a word meaning ring-dance, may have come through the Latin choraula from the Greek choros, a circling dance, or from the Greek choraules, one who accompanies the dance on a flute. Rossell Hope Robbins affirms that the earliest etymology is from chori, or processional psalms.⁶ Julian maintains that "the word Carol is derived from the Italian Carola, a ring-dance, from Carolare, to sing."⁷ The Rev. Arthur Bedford, sometime incumbent of the Temple Church, has stated that carolus was the Latin form of the name of King Charles I, during whose reign carol singing was popular.⁸ Margit Sahlin's thesis on the origin of the medieval

⁵John Stevens, "Carol," ed. by Eric Blom (5th ed.; London: MacMillan & Co Ltd., New York: St Martin's Press, 1954), II, 78.

⁶Early English Christmas Carols (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 2.

⁷Hymnology, p. 205.

⁸Sir John Stainer and Henry Ramsden Bramley, eds., Christmas Carols New and Old (London: Novello and Company, Limited, 1947), first page of Preface.

carol is based on the claim that "carol" came from the liturgical formula Kyrie eleison, through its corrupt forms of kyrielle, karielle, kariole, and karole.⁹

In addition to the controversy concerning the origin of the term "carol", one must recognize the changes which the meaning of the term has undergone since it became part of the English language some six or seven centuries ago. Collections of carols have been published in great number since the sixteenth century. In all of these there is no uniformity of definition. Some carols consist of words only, others are supplied also with music; some are religious, others secular; some are associated with Christmas, some with other seasons of the year, others with no specific occasion; some "Christmas carols" deal with the saints, making no mention of the Christ-child; some are joyful, some sad, some didactic, some amorous, some humorous; some have simple unaccompanied melodies only, others are provided with harmony, and yet others are arranged elaborately for large groups of performers; the words may be from any language, and the range of emotions expressed infinite. In short, there is no one kind of "carol".

The carols in the manuscript Arch Selden B26¹⁰ are

⁹Étude sur La Carole Médiévale (Doctoral dissertation, Uppsala, 1940).

¹⁰Hereinafter referred to as Selden.

almost as varied as those in any subsequent collection. Of the thirty carols included, four may be considered secular,¹¹ the rest deal with sacred subjects; among the seasons of the church year, two are concerned with the Annunciation,¹² thirteen with the Nativity,¹³ and one with the New Year.¹⁴ The Virgin is praised in one,¹⁵ worshipped in four,¹⁶ entreated in one,¹⁷ represented as a rose in one,¹⁸ and likened to Old Testament figures in two.¹⁹ Advice is given in one to repent,²⁰ in another to forgive,²¹ and in another not to be in haste.²² There is a political carol, describing the battle of Agincourt,²³ an agricultural

¹¹These carols are Nos. 29, 42, 12A, and 13A.

¹²Nos. 23 and 31.

¹³Nos. 16, 18, 20, 25, 26, 30, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41.

¹⁴No. 27.

¹⁵No. 28.

¹⁶Nos. 21, 24, 31, and 36.

¹⁷No. 31.

¹⁸No. 19.

¹⁹Nos. 33 and 35.

²⁰No. 17.

²¹No. 15.

²²No. 42.

²³No. 29.

carol, extolling the plough,²⁴ and a drinking carol.²⁵ English is the language of twelve,²⁶ Latin of four,²⁷ English and Latin of thirteen,²⁸ and in one a mixture of English, Latin, and French is used.²⁹ The moods expressed include joy, penitence, mirth, wonder, praise, awe, gaiety, and caution.

It is apparent that a definition of "carol" cannot be based on content. A study of the form of carols before 1550 yields the remarkable fact that all poems which are called carols by writers in that period consist of two formal parts, an invariable burden, and uniform verses. These are sung alternately, the burden beginning the carol and reappearing after each verse. This constant characteristic, the alternation of burden and verse, now provides a definition of the medieval carol. It is on the basis of its formal structure that the carol is isolated from other medieval lyrics.

²⁴No. 12A.

²⁵No. 13A.

²⁶Nos. 15, 17, 18, 25, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 42, and 12A.

²⁷Nos. 22, 28, 34, and 37. These Latin carols are called cantilenae.

²⁸Nos. 16, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 35, 36, 39 40, and 41.

²⁹No. 13A.

In his search for a rule by which to identify a carol, Richard Leighton Greene examined a vast number of lyrics which were called carols by persons living when they were being written. He observes:

The lyrics which have just been noticed differ among themselves in almost all possible respects except two, in which they are in striking agreement. All are in stanzas, the form of which is not changed in the course of the poem, and all have prefixed a group of lines which forms a burden or chorus, to be sung (or considered as sung by a reader) before the first stanza and repeated after that and all succeeding stanzas. It would seem that these two characteristics of form were those which the writers of the manuscripts recognized as the marks of the carol type.³⁰

Rejecting consideration of subject matter, spirit, function, or origin, Greene adopts the following definition of a carol as the one actually accepted before 1550:

a song on any subject, composed of uniform stanzas and provided with a burden.³¹

Later in his study he adds:

The burden makes and marks the carol. The presence of an invariable line or group of lines which is to be sung before the first stanza and after all stanzas is the feature which distinguishes the carol from all other forms of Middle English lyric.³²

The importance of the burden to the identification of a carol did not meet with total agreement by Carleton Brown, the reviewer of The Early English Carols. Noting

³⁰ The Early English Carols, hereinafter referred to as EEC (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. xxii.

³¹ Ibid., p. xxiii.

³² Ibid., p. cxxxiii.

that the specific direction to repeat the burden was lacking in a large majority of the original carol texts, Brown states:

It seems unsafe to assume that the burden was repeated after each stanza, unless, of course, the fact is established by the musical notation. . . .

.
Without laboring the point further, the reviewer feels that Dr. Greene in his assertion, "The burden makes and marks the carol" . . . makes a shibboleth of what is in many instances a formal rather than an essential criterion. With the carol, as with the ballad, it is impossible to frame a consistent and logical definition based solely upon considerations of form. There are "broadside" carols as truly as broadside ballads, in which the essential spirit and character of the carol as a choral composition have been lost even though at the head of the text is placed a group of lines serving as an ostensible "burden."³³

Nevertheless, Greene's definition has received widespread acceptance by subsequent musical and literary scholars and is generally regarded as providing the basis for stating categorically that any given text, "composed of uniform stanzas and provided with a burden", is a carol.

The Burden

The burden is the distinguishing feature of the carol. Greene speaks of its "quasi-independent character" and defines the burden as "a repeated element which does not form any part of a stanza, but stands wholly outside

³³"Review of The Early English Carols, ed. by R. L. Greene," Modern Language Notes, LII (February, 1937), 126-27.

the individual stanza-pattern."³⁴

From a structural point of view the burden unifies the carol by its regular recurrence after each verse. In each case in Selden, the burden is written at the head of the carol and its repetition after each verse is assumed. However, after the first verse of No. 29, the entire burden is written out again, in a different musical setting, indicating the invariable repeat of the burden. In some carols in other manuscripts, the beginning of the burden is added after the first verse, followed by the abbreviation "&c.", emphasizing that the burden should be repeated.

The length of burdens is variable, and provides an interesting study. By far the most common length of burden is the couplet. In Selden, a rhymed couplet is the form of burden in thirteen carols;³⁵ in eight carols the burden consists of two lines, not rhyming.³⁶ A rhymed couplet plus one word, Eya ! make up the burden of one carol,³⁷ and a rhymed couplet plus one line form the burdens of two carols.³⁸ The longest burden in Selden is the four-line

³⁴EEC, p. cxxxiii.

³⁵Nos. 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 24, 29, 32, 34, 35, 38, 39, and 40.

³⁶Nos. 18, 22, 25, 27, 28, 31, 36, and 13A.

³⁷No. 26.

³⁸Nos. 33 and 12A.

one of No. 37. Short burdens are uncommon in the carols; however, the burden consists of one line in four carols,³⁹ and of only one word, Alleluia, in one carol.⁴⁰ It should be added that there is not universal agreement on the division of text into lines.

Greene has cited some cases in which it appears that songs without burdens have been transformed into carols by the addition of burdens, and others in which one burden has been replaced by another.⁴¹ He also lists a number of burdens which are found as part of more than one carol.⁴² His discussion points out the independent character of the burden; although it is part of the carol as a whole, it need bear no relationship to the verse.

Often, however, the burden carries the theme, or main idea, of the carol. For example, the burden of No. 29 expresses thanks to God for victory in the battle of Agincourt; a description of the battle itself and the bravery of King Henry V is given in the verses. Presumably the composer of the carol wrote it thus to satisfy the devout Henry who had insisted that the usual laudatory songs be not sung in order that praise might be given to God alone.

³⁹Nos. 23, 30, 41, and 42.

⁴⁰No. 20.

⁴¹EEC, pp. cxxxiv-cxxxvi.

⁴²Ibid., p. cxxxvii.

Another example of a burden presenting the theme of the carol is No. 19. After the burden states "Of a rose sing we", each of the verses presents one aspect of the rose, that is, the Virgin. Similarly in No. 32 the burden declares, "An heavenly song . . . is sung in earth to man this day." Verse one, beginning, "This is the song that ye shall hear", continues, describing the song which was introduced by the burden. Succeeding verses tell more about the "heavenly song". In No. 27 the burden asks the question, "What tidings bringest thou, messenger?" and the verses supply the answers. As Greene observes, in his discussion of the burdens of the carols,

So well do they sum up the matter of the stanzas that a classification of the carols by subjects could almost be made from examination of the burdens alone.⁴³

The burden of No. 25, composed entirely of "Nowells", sets the tone for a carol of joy; similarly the "Alleluia" burden of No. 20 strikes the note of gladness. In these carols the verses give the reasons for joy and gladness, namely the Nativity. The warning and moralizing carols state their point like a proverb in the burden, so that it may be easily remembered. The couplet burdens at the beginning of Nos. 15 and 17 lend themselves well to repetition after each verse.

⁴³Ibid., p. cxlv.

It was apparently an established practice for a carol-writer to utilize as the burden of a piece some common moral or prudential saying suited to his purpose and at the same time accepted by the people to whom he addressed his song.⁴⁴

The Verse

Whatever its ancestry--the round dance or the processional hymn--the alternation of solo and chorus is an essential element of the carol. The burden of No. 16, "Nowell sing we both all and some", implies the contrast between large and small groups of performers. The word "stanza" itself, from the Latin stare, to stand, gives a picture of a group standing still for the singing of that part of the song which varies, and then, at the return of the burden, moving--in dance or procession--and singing the familiar, unchanging lines of song.

Picturesque though the use of the term "stanza" may be, and, no doubt, particularly applicable in monophonic dance song, the idea of simple alternation of soloist and group does not fit the more elaborate musical arrangements of all the carols in Selden. In accordance with John Stevens' procedure in the only performing edition of these carols, Mediaeval Carols,⁴⁵ the word "verse" is used

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Vol. IV of Musica Britannica (2nd, rev. ed.; The Royal Musical Association; London: Stainer and Bell Ltd, 1958).

here to denote those uniform segments of the carol having the same music but different words on each appearance.

The metrical significance of the verses lies in their uniformity. Although the number of lines and length of lines may differ within the verse and from one carol to another, yet within the carol each verse is constructed exactly like the others as regards number and length of lines, meter, and rhyme scheme. One verse form is seen more often than any other: in fifteen of the thirty carols in Selden, the verses fall into the following pattern: three four-stressed lines of equal length, all rhyming with each other, and a fourth line, usually shorter, and either rhyming with the burden or bearing some relationship to the fourth line of the other verses.⁴⁶

There are several kinds of relationships between the verses. All last lines may be identical throughout the carol, often expressing the main idea of the carol. This is the case in fourteen carols.⁴⁷ This last invariable line of the verse is called a refrain.⁴⁸ The refrain draws

⁴⁶These carols are Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 31, 32, 33, 36, 40, 41, and 13A.

⁴⁷Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32, 40, and 41.

⁴⁸The manuscript indication "Chorus" which occurs at the refrain in Nos. 17 and 18 has a two-fold meaning: "refrain" and "choir performance".

attention to the return of the burden. Its function in performance is to provide a signal for the singing of the burden.⁴⁹

A second kind of relationship is seen in seven macaronic carols in which the only Latin words in the carol appear as the last line of the verse.⁵⁰

Finally, some carols show a rhyming connection between the verses. In No. 34, the last lines of the first and second verses rhyme with each other; those of the third and fourth verses rhyme with each other. No. 16 "is unusual in the palindromic arrangement of its rhymes, the first and last monorhyming quatrains sharing the same rhyme, as do the second and fourth stanzas."⁵¹ No. 42 consists of two-line verses. All first lines rhyme with each other and with the burden; all second lines rhyme with each other. Greene, in The Early English Carols, adds the second line of the first verse to the burden, making burden

⁴⁹An illustration of the need for a signal bears repeating from a description of a tap-room ditty in an article on "The Real Rustic at Home" by T. A. Higginson in the Westminster Gazette, September 17, 1910: "To call his neighbour to his aid in the chorus, he gave him, at the end of each verse, a violent thump in the ribs, still looking straight in front of him, but finding the same spot every time." Quoted by E. K. Chambers and F. Sidgwick, "Fifteenth Century Carols by John Audelay," Modern Language Review, V (October, 1910), 476.

⁵⁰Nos. 19, 20, 21, 23, 39, 40, and 41.

⁵¹Early English Christmas Carols, p. 32.

and first verse identical. Later, however, he accepts Stevens' correction of the line arrangement.⁵² Carol No. 12A, not included in The Early English Carols, consists of three-line verses, set in such a way that the first two lines rhyme and the third lines of pairs of verses rhyme. The third line of the burden rhymes with that of the first verse; the third line of the second verse with that of the third, and so on. This rhyming connection between the burden and first verse may suggest, however faintly, that this song is not actually a carol, and that the so-called burden is actually the first verse. However, the musical structure is that of a carol, as Manfred F. Bukofzer points out:

This is an example of a strophic song that has been made into a carol by splitting off the beginning to serve as burden and sub-dividing the other stanzas. The poem was originally not a carol--this is the reason why it is not included in Greene's edition--but the musical setting is, as also Dr. Greene agrees, undoubtedly in carol form.⁵³

Added at the end of No. 13A are Latin lines which do not fit the music of either verse or burden. In his edition of Mediaeval Carols Stevens found that these words cast doubt on the form of the song, which, without them, is

⁵²"Review of Mediaeval Carols, ed. by John Stevens," Journal of the American Musicological Society, VII (Spring, 1954), 78.

⁵³Ibid., p. 64.

in true carol form.⁵⁴ Bukofzer provides a solution:

Now the additional lines are liturgical texts (short responds) and are not intended for the stanza at all. The scribe may have added them because the burden "Verbum caro factum est", which is itself a short respond, may have suggested to him other texts sung on the same liturgical occasion. All three texts may be found in the *Brevarium Sarum* (ed. Procter and Wordsworth, Vol. I, p. cxiii) in the same column. The second respond, incidentally, reads "Ipse invocavit me," both in the *Breviary* and the *Selden Ms.*, not "Prope" as the editor reads.⁵⁵

The Chorus

In twelve carols in *Selden* the burden is composed twice.⁵⁶ The second version is a three-part setting of the burden in a carol which is otherwise in two parts.⁵⁷ In three of these carols, the second setting of the burden is designated "Chorus" in the manuscript, a term significant to the understanding of the performance of the carol.⁵⁸ Gustave Reese points out, "The burden has to do with structure, the chorus with method of performance."⁵⁹

⁵⁴P. 124.

⁵⁵"Review of Mediaeval Carols," p. 64.

⁵⁶Nos. 20, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 34, 36, 38, 39, 41, and 42.

⁵⁷There are two exceptions to this statement. In No. 25, the verse is in three parts. No. 27 is entirely in two parts, including the repetition of the burden.

⁵⁸Nos. 20, 30, and 36.

⁵⁹Music in the Renaissance (Rev. ed.; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1959), p. 766.

Bukofzer's comments are relevant here.

It has generally been held by analogy with the French carole and other dance-song parallels that burden and stanza stand for choral and solo performance respectively. While this view is correct in respect to the monophonic dance song, a difficulty arises in polyphonic settings, which were traditionally reserved for soloists. Indeed, the special direction chorus, which always follows and never substitutes for the burden in the manuscripts, makes sense only if the first statement of the burden was performed by a group of soloists, and the repeat by a choral group, that is to say by more than one singer to a part. We see here that the number of parts required by the music must be distinguished from the number of singers assigned to each part. Even if burden and chorus called for three voices and were identical musically, they would still differ in performance as a solo ensemble does from a full chorus.⁶⁰

In the manuscripts the alternating arrangement of two- and three-part scores confirms that burden and chorus were sung antiphonally in direct succession. Bukofzer suggests that it is not necessarily the case that both burden and chorus were repeated after each verse; however, it is probable. "The great, if not excessive, amount of repetition resulting from this practice would be quite in keeping with the style of the popular refrain forms such as the lauda and frottola."⁶¹

Chorus sections may appear also within the verse. The verse is composed twice in two carols.⁶² In both cases

⁶⁰ Studies in Medieval & Renaissance Music (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950), p. 153.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 154, n. 69.

⁶² Nos. 42 and 12A.

the first setting of the verse is in two parts, the second in three.

There are two carols in which chorus sections repeat only part of the text of the verse,⁶³ and one in which the chorus restates only part of the burden.⁶⁴ These sections are in three parts in the midst of two-part writing. These incomplete repeats may be termed partial choruses to distinguish them from those in which the entire burden or verse is set a second time.

As the refrain at the end of a verse directly precedes the burden, a refrain within the verse may signify the return of the chorus. In No. 27, the refrain "Such wonder tidings ye now hear" introduces the chorus which is itself identical to the burden.⁶⁵ The line "Alleluia, alleluia" appears in each verse of No. 30. The first "alleluia", composed for two parts, is a refrain, followed by the chorus with the second "alleluia" set to new music in three parts.

Bukofzer points out the musical importance of the

⁶³Nos. 30 and 34.

⁶⁴No. 12A.

⁶⁵Stevens includes the repetition of only the first line of burden, noting that the repetition of the entire burden is less characteristic of carol-style. However, it is quite possible that the manuscript directive ut supra should indicate the return of the complete burden.

chorus:

The appearance of chorus sections in the stanza on variable texts proves conclusively that the customary usage of treating burden and chorus as synonymous literary and musical terms is patently inadequate. The chorus never adds a new line of text; it always repeats what has been stated before. Since it invariably adds musical but never textual variety it must be motivated by music rather than text. This is borne out by the fact that it sometimes destroys the symmetry of the lyric, for example when it repeats not a whole line but just a few words. The chorus has therefore little bearing on the verse structure, its musical significance outweighing its literary significance.⁶⁶

In his discussion of the Egerton manuscript, Bukofzer sees three types of musical relations between burden and chorus: (1) repeat, (2) variant, and (3) complete independence.⁶⁷ These classifications may be used also for a study of the choruses of Selden.

Two carols in Selden fall into the first category, the repeat. The chorus sections of Nos. 25 and 27 are exact repetitions of the original burden.⁶⁸ These repeats are not written out in the manuscript but are merely indicated by the words ut supra and, in No. 27, by the first two bars of the chorus. In Stevens' edition, the burden

⁶⁶Studies, pp. 154-55.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 155.

⁶⁸Assuming the repeat of the entire burden of No. 27, as in Sir John Stainer's transcription of this carol in Early Bodleian Music (London: Novello and Company, Limited, 1901), II, 125-26. See note 65 above. Carols 25 and 27 are thus exceptions to Bukofzer's statement, above, that "the chorus . . . invariably adds musical . . . variety."

of No. 25 is sung by all three voices in unison. At the chorus, the same notes are sung, the two upper voices in unison and the third voice in canon⁶⁹ with them, starting half way through.⁷⁰ No. 27 is the only carol in Selden in which the interpolation of the chorus of a burden within the verse is specifically indicated. The word "Chorus" in the manuscript leaves no occasion to doubt that the larger group is intended to sing here, a reasonable procedure in view of the unusually long length of the verse.

Although not specifically indicated, the "Nowell!" cry interjected into the verses of No. 38 would appear to be a partial chorus. Like the chorus of No. 27, this "Nowell" takes its text from the burden and provides variety in the middle of a long verse. By the same reasoning the "Alleluia" in the middle of the verses of No. 28 could be called a partial chorus and should perhaps be sung by the group.

The majority of choruses in Selden are variants of the original setting with a third voice added. Although there are no choruses in Selden to fit into Bukofzer's

⁶⁹ Bukofzer prefers the term "interchange of parts". See his "Review of Mediaeval Carols," p. 65.

⁷⁰ Stevens explains the manuscript indications for this interpretation in Mediaeval Carols, p. 118. Bukofzer disagrees with this method of performance, choosing another alternative suggested by Stevens. See "Review of Mediaeval Carols," p. 65.

first group, that is, restatement with the addition of a middle voice, in many carols the music is very similar on the restatement of the text, and the character of the additional voice may tend to indicate that it was an after-thought.⁷¹ An example is No. 42, "Abide, I hope it be the best, sith hasty man lacked never woe." Here the cramped part-writing, the somewhat aimless wandering of the middle voice on the restatement of the verse, especially the second phrase, and the repeated notes in that voice on a single syllable of text, point to the possible addition of the middle voice after the others were written. There is the chance that these problems may have been caused by this carol, the last in the manuscript, having been put down in haste, as if in defiance of the advice within it. In the choruses of No. 30, the close similarity of the two lower voices may suggest that it is the upper voice which has been added. However, it will be seen that the outside voices reach the customary octave or unison at the cadence. Rather than having been composed in two parts with the third part added later, it is more likely that the choruses of the Selden manuscript represent a more fully developed stage in polyphonic choral writing.

There are many ways by which the choruses vary

⁷¹See Bukofzer's comments on the carol Saint Thomas honour we, Studies, p. 155.

from the original setting. The opening of both burden and chorus in No. 34 display the same triad figure rising to the sixth, common amongst the works of Dunstable and other English composers of this period. At the chorus, however, this figure is sung a fourth higher. Augmentation is used in the opening of the chorus of No. 23. The upper vocal part is more florid in the chorus of No. 38 when compared with the burden. On its return in the chorus of No. 29, the word "Anglia" is stretched to twice its original length, presumably for greater emphasis. The chorus of No. 38 is also a lengthened version. Although Stevens remarks that this chorus is not closely related to the burden,⁷² there are two obvious similarities: the opening figure of the upper voice, and the general rhythmic pattern of the two lower voices.

The choruses of Nos. 39 and 41 show complete independence from their corresponding burdens. This independence is achieved by the use of new rhythmic figures as well as new melodic lines. It is notable that these carols are placed in the last part of the collection, perhaps signifying a greater part-writing skill developed by the composer(s) over a period of time.

Bukofzer's conclusions regarding the function of

⁷²Mediaeval Carols, p. 119.

the chorus may be noted:

The above examples are representative enough to warrant the conclusion that the function of the chorus is not always the same, and that musical and literary principles do not necessarily coincide in the carol. In the first category the musical repeat by the chorus parallels and reinforces its literary function, the repeat of a line. It serves the same function, but less strictly so, in the second category, the chorus variant, which in view of its frequent occurrence must be regarded as the norm. In this category musical considerations come to the fore and make themselves felt in the same measure as the variant differs from the burden. In the rare cases of the third category they reign supreme: the literary repeat appears as musical contrast.⁷³

There has been a considerable amount of argument over the question of the order in which burden, chorus, and verse should be sung. No exception can be taken to the constant alternation of burden and verse, the principle first established by Greene. The problem revolves around the chorus, which occurs either as a complete or partial repeat of the burden or verse. Stevens enunciates two questions: "(i) did the carol start with both or only one burden; (ii) were both burdens repeated between the verses?"⁷⁴

The cause of disagreement is the lay-out of the staves in the manuscripts. In his review of Mediaeval Carols, Bukofzer describes the situation thus:

⁷³Studies, p. 159.

⁷⁴"Carol," p. 79.

Since the chorus sections are often set off from the body of the carol by three-part scoring they pose a problem for the lay-out on the page. If they were inserted at their proper place the space would not be used economically--an important consideration for medieval scribes--because the alternation of two-part and three-part score leads to empty staves. For this reason all the three-part sections are often grouped together on one side regardless of the order of performance.⁷⁵

This practice is illustrated in No. 12A in which the three-part sections have been copied all on the same set of staves. This plan, while it confuses the order in which the different sections should be sung, was adopted, Stevens shows, in order to save space on a cramped page.⁷⁶

On the basis of different spatial arrangements in the manuscripts, Stevens suggests five different possible orders of singing the sections of the carols.⁷⁷ Order I alternates burden and verse (in carols which have no chorus); II and IV replace some of the burdens with the chorus; III adds the chorus directly after each burden except the first; and V adds the chorus after every burden. After each carol in his collection he suggests a performing order, noting that

this order represents one likely way of performing the piece but others are often possible; there was more than one 'right' way of arranging the sections

⁷⁵ P. 76.

⁷⁶ Mediaeval Carols, p. 124.

⁷⁷ Mediaeval Carols (1952), p. 138. Stevens calls the chorus repeat of an entire burden Burden II.

of a carol, allowing always, however, that Burdens(s) and Verse alternated.⁷⁸

The following are Robbins' comments on the practice of repeating the burden, first in two parts, and then in three, after each verse:

This procedure is confusing for two reasons. From a musical standpoint, the repetition of words alone has no significance. From a literary standpoint, the essential simple carol-form of couplet burden (and in some cases quatrain stanzas) is complicated without warrant. A more plausible view is that the two arrangements are alternative, that is, one or the other to be sung, according to the occasion or the ability⁷⁹ of the performers, but never to be sung concurrently.

Bukofzer takes an opposite view:

The fact is that extensive repeats are characteristic of all the fixed forms; those of the carol are indeed mild in comparison with the rondeau in which the first section is heard six times before one is through with the first verse. Partial repeats . . . and a reduced number of repeats, such as recommended in Orders II, III, and IV, would therefore be out of style. . . . The chorus section, no matter whether it comprises the whole or only a part of the burden is a varied answer and not a self-sufficient section like the burden. It cannot therefore replace the burden.⁸⁰

He cites as an example the two variants of the carol David ex progenie, Nos. 34 and 46 from the Selden and Egerton manuscripts, respectively:

The former source gives the chorus sections in burden and stanza at their proper places as direct repeats,

⁷⁸Ibid., p. xvi.

⁷⁹"The Burden in Carols," Modern Language Notes, LVII (January, 1942), 17-18.

⁸⁰"Review of Mediaeval Carols," pp. 76-77.

the latter groups all three-part sections together on the opposite page, but indicates the point of insertion by :|:. The very fact that a sign was invented to mark the proper place proves that the order of performance is the same in both carols . . . Yet the editor [Stevens] assigns to each a different order, Order IV to the first, and Order II to the second. Both are incorrect; it should read in either case Order V.⁸¹

Stevens defends his editorial practice on the basis of the note-guides given in the manuscripts after the burden leading to the verse. In No. 46, from the Egerton manuscript, these note-guides show that the burden is to be followed directly by the verse. Similar note-guides are given also in No. 36 as well as in several carols in other manuscripts. Stevens comments:

We are forced to the conclusion that B V BII was one of the accepted orders for the beginning of a polyphonic carol. A large number of carols are, on the other hand, arranged in the manuscript B BII V and have this order confirmed by note-guides. This is the order of the processional hymns . . . which so closely resemble the carol in form; and this, it must be admitted, seems the most natural way to start what is in essence responsorial music: burden (soloists), burden II (chorus), followed by verse (soloists with choral repeats).⁸²

Bukofzer concludes that the chorus must be considered an optional addition, but its inclusion or exclusion must be consistent throughout the carol.

There are only two types of order, if one wants to make a division at all, the normal scheme:
B V₁ B V₂ ... B, and what the editor calls Order V:
B BII (or chorus) V₁ B BII V₂ ... B BII. It is easy

⁸¹Ibid., p. 77.

⁸²"Carol," p. 79.

to see that this is basically one and the same order, the alternation of burden and verse or stanza. All that is needed to make allowance for elaboration is to say that any part of the carol may be extended by a chorus section (or varied repeat) which always directly follows the section it enlarges. Just as any carol can be optionally extended by the addition of chorus sections, one form of which would be the addition of a middle part, it can be optionally reduced by the omission of chorus sections. In either case the essential structure of the carol would be left untouched. The addition or omission of chorus sections are the two essential options that exist in the performance of the carol, but these options cannot be applied partially. The chorus sections must either be sung or be omitted, but they cannot first be omitted and then sung in place of the burden.⁸³

For performers, Bukofzer added this word of guidance:

All they need to do is to repeat the chorus variant of the burden directly after the burden, no matter where it is printed in the edition, or--if they so choose--to omit the chorus sections altogether.⁸⁴

In his revised (1958) edition of Mediaeval Carols, Stevens, acknowledging Bukofzer's valuable criticism, has changed the suggested order of performance, for each carol in Selden having a chorus, to read B BII V₁ B BII V₂ B BII ... B BII, according to Bukofzer's recommendations quoted above. Thus the controversial issue of order may be considered settled.

Rounding

All of the carols in Selden are rounded carols,

⁸³"Review of Mediaeval Carols," p. 77.

⁸⁴Ibid.

that is, carols in which similarities or identical repetitions exist between burden and verse. There may be correspondences in text, or in music, or both.

Bukofzer explored the rounded carols in the Egerton manuscript, noting that

the principle of carol composition is simple enough: burden and stanza receive different settings, both self-contained and clearly separated in the manuscript. The music fully supports Greene's contention that a structurally independent burden is the decisive element of the carol form. In spite of this independence, however, burden and stanza are quite often connected by means of structural "cross relations."⁸⁵

These parallelisms appear with respect to both literary structure and music. Textual "cross relations" will here be considered first.

The most significant textual relationship between verses and burden occurs in those carols in which all final verse lines are the same.⁸⁶ In all of these, the refrain appears as part of the burden, either as the beginning or ending or some internal part of the burden. In No. 41, burden and refrain are the same. Two other carols bear a similar relationship of verses to burden: the one word refrain of No. 30, "Alleluia", appears in the burden; and the last line of the single verse of No. 36 constitutes

⁸⁵Studies, p. 159. See Bukofzer's examination of rounded carols in the Egerton manuscript, pp. 159-64.

⁸⁶Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32, 40, and 41.

the burden of that carol.

A textual repeat between burden and first verse may be seen in four carols in which the entire burden appears as part of the first verse.⁸⁷

In several carols not having refrains, all lines of the verses except the last fall into a complete rhyme scheme, but the last line rhymes with the burden.⁸⁸ The rhyming of all first lines of the verses of No. 42 with the burden has been noted above.

A partial chorus, not necessarily indicated as such in the manuscript, repeats, within the verse, words from the burden of three carols.⁸⁹

There appears to be no textual rounding in four carols, all of which are macaronic.⁹⁰

Nearly all of the carols in Selden show rounding also in their music in the form of similar or identical melodic lines in both burden and verse.

The most spectacular musical rounding is in those carols in which the music of the entire burden is repeated in the verse.⁹¹ A sign is merely inserted in the manu-

⁸⁷Nos. 20, 34, 36, and 42.

⁸⁸Nos. 19, 20, 27, 31, 33, 37, and 38.

⁸⁹Nos. 27, 28, and 38.

⁹⁰Nos. 26, 35, 39, and 13A.

⁹¹Nos. 33, 34, 36, 37, and 40.

script to denote the repeat in Nos. 36 and 37. In No. 33 all the music of the burden is repeated in the verse, but not in the same sequence.⁹² The music of the burden of No. 34 reappears in the last part of the verse, excluding the three-part section. The burden of No. 40 corresponds musically to the last two lines of the verse.

In several carols the music of only part of the burden is repeated in the verse. In most cases this repeat occurs at the refrain. The function of the refrain, to signal the return of the burden, is thus effectively accomplished by bringing to mind the music of the burden. In four carols the refrain is a repeat of the last part of the burden.⁹³ The first line of burden becomes the music of the refrain in four carols.⁹⁴ "This particular method of rounding presents the composer with the difficulty of inventing a strain that serves in the burden as antecedent phrase and in the refrain as consequent phrase."⁹⁵ In five carols without refrains the music of the last line of the burden appears at the closing

⁹²The identical bars are as follows: 1-2=16-18; 3-8=31-37; 9 (upper voice) = 36 (lower voice); 9 (lower voice) = 34 (upper voice); 10-12=37-39; 13-15=38-40.

⁹³Nos. 17, 21, 28, and 40.

⁹⁴Nos. 15, 22, 25, and 27.

⁹⁵Studies, p. 161.

part of the verse.⁹⁶ Musical rounding is seen also between the burden and the opening part of the verse; the first line of both burden and verse have the same music in five carols.⁹⁷

Rounding is achieved in two carols by the use of short melodic-rhythmic figures. Three of these motives, seen in Example 1, occur in the burden of No. 25 and are repeated many times throughout the verse. The three-note figure (a) rising by step on the first Nowell of the burden occurs twice more in the burden and eight times in the verse. The four-note falling motive (b) on the "well" of the second Nowell in the burden is repeated at different pitches seven times in the verse. The two-note falling stepwise figure (c) on the fourth Nowell of the burden may be found four times in the verse. No. 42, the other carol in Selden whose burden is first sung in unison, is musically rounded also by means of melodic-rhythmic figures, as seen in Example 2. A cadential formula (a) appears at different pitches nine times throughout the carol; another figure (b) may be found eight times.

⁹⁶These carols are Nos. 26 (disregarding the exclamation, "Eya!"), 27, 30 (where a strong resemblance exists between the music of the third alleluia of the burden and the last two lines of the verse, with some crossing of parts), 33, and 39.

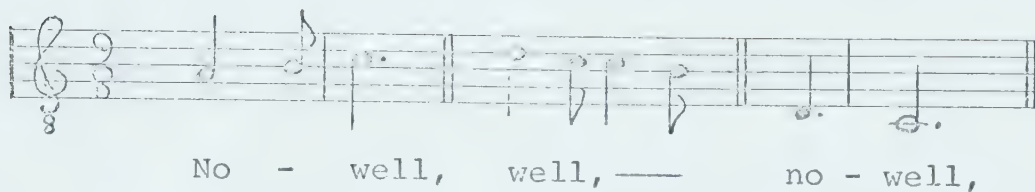
⁹⁷Nos. 15, 22, 31, 32, and 12A. Two lines are the same in burden and verse of No. 12A.

Ex. 1. No. 25.

(a) Mm. 1-2.

(b) M. 3.

(c) Mm. 4-5.



Ex. 2. No. 42

(a) Mm. 7-8.

(b) Mm. 3-4.



Shorter passages to be found in both burden and verse, especially at the cadence, show evidence of rounding. A vague line exists between intentional repeat of a musical passage or figure, and the accidental use of the same cadence. However, similar rounding treatment in consecutive carols in the manuscript would tend to show that such was done by intention and not by accident. Moreover, these brief musical correspondences between burden and verse occur at only a few points in the carols: between part of the burden and that part of the verse directly before the refrain;⁹⁸ at the opening of both burden and

⁹⁸See Nos. 16, 21, and 29.

verse,⁹⁹ or closing of both burden and verse;¹⁰⁰ at the close of the first phrases of both burden and verse,¹⁰¹ or at the close of other phrases.¹⁰²

Although there are similarities in the rise and fall of the melodic lines, the note values, and phrase structure between burden and verse of Nos. 20 and 24, these, in spite of their resemblances, must be considered musically unrounded carols. It is worthy of note that both are macaronic carols and both display textual rounding.

Nearly all the carols show both textual and musical rounding in their structure. Since all the carols except three show textual rounding, and all but two display musical rounding, nothing more need be said about those in which the textual correspondences do not occur at the same places as the musical correspondences. It is very interesting to observe, however, those few carols in which "music and text are in strict correspondence; in other words, the return of a line is paralleled by a musical

⁹⁹Nos. 17, 18, 23, 35, and 40.

¹⁰⁰Nos. 31, 32, 35, 38, 41, and 13A.

¹⁰¹Nos. 19 and 35.

¹⁰²No. 28 has the same music at the end of the second phrase of the burden, at the end of the first phrase of the verse, and at the end of the chorus. The ending of the first phrase of the burden corresponds to that of the second phrase of the verse in both Nos. 28 and 32.

repeat."¹⁰³

Most notable are the refrains which are repeated, literally and musically, as part of the burden.¹⁰⁴ The chorus repeat of the burden within the verse of No. 27 rounds that carol. Part of the musically augmented refrain of No. 16 is found to the same words in the burden. The openings of burden and verse of No. 18 show brief rounding.

¹⁰³Studies, p. 161.

¹⁰⁴Nos. 21, 22, 25, 36, and 40.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGIN AND USE OF CAROLS

To trace the beginnings of the English carol involves examination of its original function. Was the carol synonymous with carole, a round dance? Was the carol in England merely a branch of the development of similar art forms all across Europe? Was it, to begin with, sacred or secular? Did it originate as a musical or a literary form, hence, was it always sung? And when sung, by whom--the learned or the uneducated--and where--in the church or on the village green? Were carols intended purely for entertainment or did they have a didactic or religious purpose? Why were they written down, and why did they cease to be written?

There are two main streams of thought regarding the origin of the English carol; the one is generally supported by literary historians and the other by musicologists. Led by Richard Leighton Greene, the first group clings to the theory of the derivation of the carol from the dance, on the basis of their two common features: strict verse form and recurrent burden. The opposing view looks to the church for the birth of the carols, fostered by the clergy to serve as aids in the struggle against

paganism, and incorporated into the church services as processional hymns.

Influence of the Dance

The association of dancing with singing in the early middle ages in England must certainly have existed, but there is little evidence of it. In France, however, dance-songs were known to be an important part of entertainment for all classes. M. Alfred Jeanroy's study of the origins of the French lyric describes the relationship between song and dance.¹ He establishes the theory that the metrical form of the dance finds its counterpart in lyric poetry. For example, the ballette and rondel, while no longer danced, remain as specific verse-forms. A similar relationship is said to exist between the carole, an early medieval ring dance, and the carol, a term which is found in English literature about the beginning of the fourteenth century. Greene cites examples of the early use of the word "carol", which, he claims, meant "dance with song" during the fourteenth century, but "song not actually accompanied by dancing" in the fifteenth century.²

¹Les Origines de la poésie lyrique en France au moyen âge (4th ed.; Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, Editeur, 1965).

²The Early English Carols, hereinafter referred to as EEC (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), pp. xv-xx.

Based on an article by M. Joseph Bédier,³ Greene gives an illuminating description of the carole:

It consisted of a chain, open or closed, of male and female dancers, who moved to the accompaniment of the voice or (less frequently) of instruments. The movement was ordinarily three steps in measure to the left, followed by some kind of marking time in place. It was usual for the dancers to join hands, but gestures seem frequently to have been introduced which would require the clasp to be broken. The whole procedure was under the direction of a leader. It was the duty of this leader . . . to sing the stanzas of the song to which the carole was being danced. During the time of such singing the ring moved to the left. At the close of the stanza the entire company of dancers would respond with the refrain or burden of the song, dancing in place the while. Then, as the circle revolved again, the leader would sing the following stanza, and so on. Obviously the leader was the only one of the group who needed to know all the words of a song; the burden, being invariable or nearly so, could be quickly learned and easily remembered by the chorus. Some sort of cue in words or music would serve to notify the chorus of its time for beginning the burden.⁴

The main features of the carole, the circular motion and the division of the group into leader and chorus, were seen in dances in many countries and probably figured in English dances as well. "Likewise in many lands and centuries were to be heard songs which owed their form to the fact that they were sung in such dances."⁵

An example of similar structure is the ballata,

³"Les plus anciennes danses françaises," Revue des deux mondes (pér. v, vol. xxxi), pp. 398-424, cited by Greene in EEC, p. xxxi.

⁴EEC, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

⁵Ibid., p. xxxiii.

originally an Italian dance-song. Its fundamental verse scheme was that of the carole: a two-line ritornello, or burden, and a stanza composed of three lines rhyming together and a fourth rhyming with the burden. Greene describes an important development from the ballata:

From [its] beginning in popular song the ballata grew, under the hands of cultivated poets, into a number of longer and more elaborate forms, . . . The simple four-line stanza with two-line burden, as above, was retained with especial frequency in the Italian lyrics known as laude, which, in their association of religious praise with the language and song-measures of the common people, so much resemble the English religious carol. . . .

The persistence of this type of stanza, the foundation of which is three lines riming together, may be explained, in the laude as in songs of the other languages, by regarding them as written for airs constructed on the model of popular dance-tunes, if not for such dance-tunes themselves. For such a stanza-form grew naturally out of a type of dance with a thrice-repeated movement. A verse for such song would require three lines to the same musical phrase, and hence riming, plus a line corresponding to the coda of the music, and giving, by its new rime, a cue to the chorus, whose burden would end with this new rime.

The dominance of this type of stanza in the English carol indicates that the genre may properly be regarded as the English representative of a European family of lyric forms originating in the carole or a round dance very much like it.⁶

Greene bases his thesis on the supposition that when the ring-dance fell out of popularity the verse form on which it was constructed remained in use. As the lauda grew out of the ballata, the carol emerged from the earlier carole. "For it is on the metrical form of poetry that the

⁶Ibid., pp. xlvii-xlvihi.

influence of the dance has principally operated and left more or less easily discernible traces."⁷ Obviously, the carol-song and the carole-dance have the same essential formal elements: uniform verses alternating with an invariable burden. "It is a structure of poetry which has persisted long after its almost complete separation from the conditions which gave it birth."⁸ The typical carole verse form, like that of the lauda, is three rhyming lines and a fourth line linking them to the burden. This form is indeed found in 188 of the 474 carols collected by Greene, and in fifteen of the thirty carols in the manuscript Arch Selden B26.⁹

In support of his theory, Greene cites examples from early English literature, admittedly "scanty gleanings", of the existence of the round dance in England.¹⁰ He shows that the lines

Honnd by honnd we schulle ous take,
And joye and blisse schulle we make,¹¹

⁷Ibid., p. xxix.

⁸Ibid., p. xxxiii.

⁹Hereinafter referred to as Selden.

¹⁰EEC, pp. xxxiii-xxxv.

¹¹This carol is No. 12 in EEC. It is also printed by Carleton Brown in Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century (2nd ed., rev; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 110, with useful notes on p. 272. The manuscript to which this carol belongs is described below, pp. 81-82.

from a fourteenth-century Franciscan collection "are plainly an imitation of the burden of some song for a round dance."¹² Admitting that "English poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries does not exhibit anything of like form that can be connected with the dance," Greene gives several examples of English carols which show in their verse form the metrical structure of the earlier carole. He concludes:

Instances could be multiplied, but the comparisons already made show the essential identity of principle in the construction of the French dance-songs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the English carols preserved in manuscripts of two to three hundred years later. That identity of principle is the best possible evidence of their common parentage in the dance, the carole.¹³

Rossell Hope Robbins voices his disagreement with Greene's theory, as follows:

Critics have been misled by scattered contemporary references to English dances as carols, by a possible derivation of the French word, carole, from dance (although the earliest etymology is from chori, or processional psalms), and by the resemblance to some

¹²EEC, p. cxli. But Margit Sahlin describes the same carol as a Christmas lullaby sung around the crib in church: "Ainsi, l'un des très rares carols connus du XIV^e siècle, n^o 12 (Honnd by honnd . . ., des environs de 1350), est certainement un de ces noëls ou lullaby carols (kindelwiegenlieder) que l'on chantait en dansant autour d'un berceau arrangé sur l'autel ou autre part dans l'église, comme il était d'usage en bien des endroits." (Etude sur La Carole Médiévale, Doctoral Dissertation, Uppsala, 1940), p. 58.

¹³EEC, p. xxxix.

French dance songs written in quatrains with burden. Critics have thus assumed that there were similar dances in England, and that the English religious carols ultimately stem from the dance. That there were dance songs in England, as in most other countries, is indisputable; miniatures depict both chain or ring as well as line or cortege dancing. But the theory is questionable, for there is not a single recorded example of an early English dance song in the pattern of the carol.¹⁴

The scarcity of evidence linking the carol to the dance leads one to the question:

Surely, if dance carols exercised the commanding influence claimed for them, there would be one example left?¹⁵

Robbins' reply is:

Rather than account for some eighty percent of all the carols being religious, by considering them (like the Italian laude) spiritual parodies of dance songs, it would seem simpler and more logical to look for the origin of these vernacular hymns in the practices of the Church itself.¹⁶

Carols as Processional Hymns

R. L. Greene himself prompted an alternative view of the origin of the carol by his question: "Which, if any, of the carol-texts here collected were actually sung in the round dance?"¹⁷ Although he minimizes the loose

¹⁴Early English Christmas Carols (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 2.

¹⁵Rossell Hope Robbins, "Middle English Carols as Processional Hymns," Studies in Philology, LVI (October, 1959), 576.

¹⁶Early English Christmas Carols, p. 2.

¹⁷EEC, p. lvi.

connection between fifteenth-century carols and twelfth- and thirteenth-century dancing, the answer is virtually "none". Some carols, such as the lullabies and the allegorical ones, are eliminated from the dancing ring on the basis of their subject matter, some on their conventional division into solo and chorus parts. Those with music show that they were written to be part-songs throughout, not, as in the carole, solo for verse and chorus for burden; those signed with a composer's name indicate not simple dance-song but studied harmony. Others, Greene suggests, imply a processional use, especially the boar's-head group. He concludes:

But the frequency with which exhortations to the company to sing are introduced, as compared with the scarcity of allusions to dancing, implies that in the fifteenth century the carol was usually sung without being danced to. . . . The probability is that most of the pieces here collected were meant to be sung, at the time they were written down, much as they would be to-day, not in a dancing ring, but in a company¹⁸ gathered for conviviality or for religious praise.

In opposition to what he calls the "pulse of flying feet" theory, Robbins suggests that

the earliest Middle English carols were made by ecclesiastical authors and composers specifically for singing in church processions, and that this function is likewise that of at least 80 per cent of all extant carols. Furthermore, the mere handful of carols before 1425 shows no debt to a French or native tradition of popular dance song; indeed, the distinctive carol form is better explained by the traditional Latin proces-

¹⁸Ibid., p. lix.

sional hymn.¹⁹

Margit Sahlin had earlier suggested that carols had, primarily, a processional function:

La plupart de ces chansons avaient un caractère religieux ou rituel, et elles semblent destinées en premier lieu à être chantées aux danses et aux processions populaires de certaines fêtes ecclésiastiques.²⁰

(Most of these songs had a religious or ritual character, and seem to be originally intended to be sung in dances and popular processions of certain ecclesiastical feasts.)

There is a large amount of evidence to support this view.

The following account gives a picture of the medieval procession:

The later Middle Ages were marked by pageantry both in secular and religious celebrations. Knightly sports and tournaments regaled the aristocracy. Crusades and pilgrimages were accompanied by banners and armorial display. It is likewise the period of the liturgical drama. Processional rites now take on a new variety and splendor. The outdoor procession, in the spirit of the age, became a gala occasion with full participation by peasants, burghers, students, guildsmen or other inhabitants of the town or countryside. When the medieval period closed, lay singers and musicians took their appropriate places. The hymns, psalms and antiphons of the choirs mingled with the popular religious lyrics accompanied by, or alternated with, instrumental music.²¹

The texts of the carols themselves point out their

¹⁹"Processional Hymns," p. 560.

²⁰Étude, p. 59.

²¹Ruth Ellis Messenger, "Processional Hymnody in the Later Middle Ages," Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, LXXXI (1950), 189.

ecclesiastical purpose. It has been noted that the texts of all except four of the thirty carols in Selden deal with sacred subjects. Even those four have some religious content: one contains an expression of praise to God, one a prayer, one a doctrinal statement, and the other a moralizing message.²² Robbins comments:

The carols are obviously intended for a definitely practical religious use; they form a means to salvation just as surely as the liturgy, hymns, or private prayers. In not one or two, but in many carols are prayer tags and short popular prayers, Biblical and sometimes patristic references, and Latin lines from hymns and antiphons, as well as the common verses or pericopes used repeatedly throughout the liturgy.²³

Further evidence is obtained by a study of the other music in the manuscripts containing polyphonic carols. Three of the four major collections of carol music contain Latin antiphons from the Sarum and other processional. In Selden these processional hymns are interspersed among the English carols, whereas in the Egerton and Ritson manuscripts the Latin hymns are kept distinct from the carols.

The juxtaposition in MS. Arch. Selden is strong presumptive evidence that the compilers made little distinction in use, else the items would have been

²²These are, respectively, No. 29, "Deo gracias"; No. 12A, "God speed the plough alway"; No. 13A, "Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis"; and No. 42, "Sith hasty man lacked never woe".

²³"Processional Hymns," p. 561. Robbins, in a footnote on the same page, lists carols in which may be found prayer tags, the use of "sing" or "pray", Biblical references, and Latin lines.

rearranged for more convenient handling in choir practice.²⁴

The contents of the Ritson manuscript support the theory of ecclesiastical function: "With the notable exception of the masses and English part songs, almost all of the balance of the manuscript can be explained by its relation to processional rites."²⁵

The carols appear to be intended for use on particular feast days, especially those around Christmas. Twenty-seven of the thirty carols in Selden would be appropriately sung on one or more of the following occasions: Annunciation, Advent, Christmas Day, the feasts of the Virgin, New Year's Day, Circumcision, and Plough Monday (the first Monday after Epiphany). The carols of the Ritson manuscript are specifically labelled with the following rubrics indicating their appropriate liturgical feast: de sancta Maria, de sancto Johanne, de innocentibus, in die nativitatis, de nativitate, in fine nativitatis, de nativitate Domini, in die circumcisionis, Sancti Stephani, de sancto Thoma, and Epiphanie; several are marked ad placitum.

²⁴Ibid., p. 562.

²⁵Catherine K. Miller, "A Fifteenth Century Record of English Choir Repertory: B. M. Add. MS. 5665" (2 vols.; unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1948), pp. 21-23.

None, Greene points out, is marked ad processionem.²⁶

John Stevens shows that all the rubrics which are specific refer to feasts within the octave of Christmas.

However, he notes,

It is perhaps wrong to think of the headings as referring necessarily to different days in Christmas week; there may even be an intended distinction between in die and de, the latter meaning that the carol was intended for procession to a particular altar. We know, for instance, from the Sarum Customary that there were processions after evensong on Christmas Day and the three following days to the altars of St. Stephen, St. John, the Holy Innocents and St. Thomas.²⁷

Stevens observes that although the service books of the Sarum use never actually specify that carols are to be sung, they do direct that "responsories" are to be sung in such processions to the altars of the saints mentioned. Since all carols are responsorial, and other events of the church year are rarely referred to explicitly, "this does seem to mean that the carols were written especially for use in ecclesiastical procession at Christmas time."²⁸

Catherine Miller adds:

The Christmas use of the form, which is its most ex-

²⁶ A Selection of English Carols, hereinafter referred to as SEC (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 44.

²⁷ "Carol," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. by Eric Blom (5th ed.; London: MacMillan & Co Ltd., New York: St Martin's Press, 1954), II, 82.

²⁸ "Medieval English Carols," The Listener, December 18, 1952, p. 1049.

tensive and important, stems from the length of the medieval celebration, the three months from Advent to Candlemas, as well as from the primacy of its subject to the Christian.²⁹

Of the 474 carols collected by Greene, 202 contain Latin lines. "With a few exceptions, the carols in this large group are of religious or moral content, and the Latin which they contain is naturally for the most part in the idiom of the Church."³⁰

Latin words are found in fourteen carols in Selden, in addition to the four cantilenae. Some Latin parts are composed specially for their particular places in the carol and are not quoted from another source. These are the truly macaronic carols, in which Latin and English are blended with perfect syntax, as in No. 16, Nowell sing we both all and some. It is remarkable that the continuity of thought is not disturbed by the macaronic elements in the text; the Latin is skilfully chosen so as to carry on the sense of the English.

Other Latin lines, which appear mainly in the burdens and refrains, are taken from hymns, the Scriptures,

²⁹"The Late Medieval English Carol," notes to Medieval English Carols and Italian Dances, recording by the New York Pro Musica, Noah Greenberg, director (Decca Gold Label; DL 79418).

³⁰EEC, p. lx.

antiphons, and other parts of the liturgy.³¹

In this case the line or lines chosen have usually an exclamatory or sententious character, maintaining by repetition the central theme of the piece and summarizing its content. These burdens or refrains are often not exactly fitted to the syntax of the adjoining lines as in fully macaronic verse, but rarely are they irrelevant or inappropriate. . . . As a rule their introduction does not impair perfect regularity of metre.³²

Being familiar to medieval churchgoers, these Latin expressions were particularly suitable for inclusion in processional hymns which the people would sing in their own language. The following familiar Latin lines are used as refrains in Selden: No. 21, Regina celi, letare; No. 23, Redemptoris mater; No. 24, Ave domina; No. 40, Qui natus fuit hodie, and No. 41, Veni, Redemptor gentium.

Greene has tabled Latin lines of the carols, taken from hymns, prose and antiphons, and shown their use and source.³³ For example, the macaronic carol No. 26 takes the first and fourth lines of each verse, altogether ten out of its twenty lines, from eight different Latin hymns prescribed for use in the Offices on various occasions.

Robbins comments:

³¹In four carols in Selden lacking a refrain, the last line of each verse is in Latin. These are Nos. 19, 20, 26, and 39.

³²SEC, pp. 35-36.

³³EEC, pp. lx-xcii.

In his great work of listing the sources of the Latin tags, Professor Greene traced them to the individual hymns; but he failed to ask at what point in the service these Latin hymns were used. Consequently he missed the immediate source of many of the Latin lines, not the missal or breviary, but the processional.³⁴

Robbins points out that the refrains of two carols in Selden, Redemptoris mater, No. 23, and Regina celi, letare, No. 21, are lines from antiphons to the Virgin common in processionals. Robbins quotes other lines from carols, in other manuscripts, to the Virgin, St. Stephen, and St. Thomas of Canterbury, and shows the source of these lines in the processionals of York or Sarum and their use in specific processions on the respective saints' days.³⁵

Further evidence of the heritage of the Middle English carol in the Latin processional hymn is seen in the English poems of Friar William Herebert, who died in 1333.³⁶ Two of these poems demonstrate carol form by their repetition of an opening phrase after each verse. One, a true carol, is a translation of the Latin processional hymn, Gloria, laus, et honor, sung antiphonally in the Palm Sunday rites.³⁷ The English translation retains

³⁴"Processional Hymns," p. 564.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 564-66.

³⁶These poems are found in B.M. Addit. MS. 46919.

³⁷This carol, omitted from Greene's collections, is listed by Robbins in "The Middle English Carol Corpus: Some Additions," Modern Language Notes, LXXIV (March, 1959), 200.

the carol form of burden alternating with verse and follows the Latin metrically, so that it could be sung to the same music. The other is a translation of the Good Friday Improperia (Reproaches of Christ) sung in the procession which terminates in the adoration of the cross.³⁸ Here the manuscript indicates the repetition of the burden after each verse, strongly suggesting carol form, and linking that form with its fifteenth-century function, namely, "for singing in church processions."³⁹

It is interesting to notice that English, the language of the people, was used first in the church about the same time as the vernacular carols were being written. Robbins observes:

Processions were the logical place for the introduction of the vernacular, perhaps because they were conducted outside the chancel, in the nave. Their inherent variability placed them outside the stricter liturgical formulae of the mass and offices, and exposed them more easily to accretion and change. . . .

Apart from the short passages in the services of Baptism, Marriage, and the Visitation of the Sick, contained in the manual, the first English used in medieval church services occurred in the processions. The Bidding Prayer, addressed to the congregation by the priest when the procession had reached the rood separating nave and choir, or from the pulpit, is found in many manuscripts.⁴⁰

³⁸Because three of the twelve verses depart from the regular couplet form to three-line or four-line verses, Robbins lists this hymn as a "pseudo carol", ibid., p. 205.

³⁹Rossell Hope Robbins, "Friar Herebert and the Carol," Anglia, LXXV, N. F. LXI (1957), 194-98. See below, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁰"Processional Hymns," p. 568.

It is significant that carols ceased to be written at about the same time as processions were banned from the church. The reforms of Henry VIII forbade processions in 1547; the liturgical carols, now no longer needed, disappeared. Greene sets 1550 as the end of the medieval carol "for the reason that the carol form appears at about that time to have lost its great popularity with some suddenness."⁴¹

The singing of the Litany took the place of the procession. The Litany may be defined as "solemn supplications addressed to God, the Virgin, or the Saints."⁴²

Sahlin has shown that many of the carols are "popular litanies":

Ces carols ne sont souvent que des litanies populaires, destinées, nous semble-t-il, à être chantées aux processions et aux danses sacrées des fêtes ecclésiastiques. Leur parenté avec les supplications des litanies est évidente dans les refrains de plusieurs des carols du recueil de M. Greene.⁴³

(Often, these carols are but popular litanies, intended, it seems, to be sung in processions and religious dances on church feast days. Their close resemblance to the supplications of the litanies is evident in the burdens of many carols in Greene's collection.)

The burdens in many carols may well have been

⁴¹EEC, p. vii.

⁴²Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music (2nd ed., rev.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 485.

⁴³Étude, p. 56.

used for public prayer. Robbins observes: "While the petitions in carols may also serve as private devotions, they are primarily public observances, especially when the petitions come in the group choral burdens."⁴⁴

It is not the burdens but the final verses of at least ten of the carols in Selden that could serve as public prayers.⁴⁵ These supplications are addressed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Blessed Virgin; the words "pray" and "grant" are often used. In six out of the ten cases, the word "now" opens the prayer, implying that at this point the procession had reached its end and the people were pausing for prayer.

With the foregoing theories Greene strongly disagrees.

A conclusion with a form of prayer, found in a great many carols, is not a sign that the piece is designed for use in church rather than for a social gathering in a hall. A benediction or a prayer for salvation of the company is the standard conclusion for a piece of medieval poetry of almost any kind, narrative as well as lyric, and often for a song or tale of completely secular or even coarse nature. It usually implies no connexion whatever with a church service.⁴⁶

He points out that the term "litany" can be properly applied to only one carol, that beginning "Jhesus, for

⁴⁴"Processional Hymns," p. 571.

⁴⁵See the final verses of Nos. 21, 25, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 39, 41, and 12A.

⁴⁶SEC, p. 31.

thi holy name", from the manuscript Eng. poet. e. 1, "of which the convivial character is obvious."⁴⁷

Further evidence of derivation from the church is offered by the few carols which survive from before the era of the polyphonic carol, a genre which appeared about 1420. Of the nine carols which, according to Robbins, survive from before 1400, seven are religious, all found in Franciscan manuscripts. The other two are secular art songs written under French courtly influence.

On the evidence of these nine fourteenth-century carols, then, the likelihood of carols deriving from popular dance is nil; the likelihood of deriving from church procession, very strong.⁴⁸

Robbins shows, furthermore, that none of the twelve carols from between 1400 and 1425 show any evidence of derivation from the dance.⁴⁹

If it is argued that later dance songs formed the basis of the English carol, is it scholarly to have a tail of 20 to 30 texts that might possibly have been used for dancing wagging the dog of some 500 carols completely unsuited for this purpose?⁵⁰

He concludes:

It is not necessary to explain the genesis and development of the English carol by searching for correspondence to French popular dances of three centuries

⁴⁷This carol is No. 309a in EEC. Its first verse is found in nine other medieval manuscripts. See EEC, p. 213.

⁴⁸"Processional Hymns," p. 577.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 577-78.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 578.

earlier; this is dragging in a red herring that blends ill with the smell of incense. The Middle English carol was patterned on Latin processional hymns with burden, stanza, and repeated burden. Its main tradition was not vernacular, secular, and foreign; but Latin, religious, and native.⁵¹

Catherine Miller agrees that "many carols were used in procession, and it now appears clear that they took the form of the traditional processional hymn and enlarged its repertory." However, she submits a variant view of the beginnings of the carol:

It is still possible to urge that both carol and hymn were somehow related to the round dance, but it is probably just as helpful to turn the argument inside out and judge that the carol form (ABACA, etc.) was simply a part of a network of formes fixes (rondeau, carole, virelai, villancico, and others) which resembled each other as well as parts of the Catholic Church service, such as the processional hymn. Then, as now, Rome was the power behind the structure of the service and regularized it to some extent throughout Christendom. The poetic ABACA scheme, then, was a part of the common heritage and thought of the West, appearing and reappearing in a multitude of ways and contexts down the centuries. The processional hymn and the early English carol represented two of them, and it was no accident that they were alike in form and function.⁵²

The view of another dissenter in the crowd of critics must be mentioned. Frank Ll. Harrison rejects the theory that carols were sung in liturgical processions, since the music and ceremonial of processions was laid down in the Ordinal which governed the ritual, and the music was fully provided in the service-book called the

⁵¹Ibid., p. 582.

⁵²"The Late Medieval English Carol."

Processional.⁵³

Basing his opinion on a study of the texts, Harrison says:

The words of some polyphonic carols, a genre which appeared about the time the conductus was going out of use, make it likely that the sacred carol of the fifteenth century took over from the conductus the role of *Benedicamus* substitute on certain festivals.⁵⁴

The festivals to which he refers are the three days after Christmas, the Circumcision, and Epiphany, on all of which a relatively free choice of music was allowed as a substitute for the *Benedicamus Domino--Deo gratias* with which the Office normally ended. The vast majority of fifteenth-century carols, and all but a few in Selden are particularly appropriate to this festal season from Christmas to the Epiphany.

Carols sung in choir during this period would almost certainly have been substitutes for the *Benedicamus*, and the texts of some polyphonic carols strongly suggest that this was their function.⁵⁵

Some such texts from Selden are the two closing lines of No. 22, "*Benedicamus domino; Deo gracias;*" the refrain of No. 29, "*Deo gracias;*" and the last line of No. 34, "*Benedicat Domino.*" These lines, Harrison claims, show the

⁵³"The English Medieval Carol," *The Listener*, December 27, 1956, p. 1086.

⁵⁴*Music in Medieval Britain* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), pp. 416-17.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 417.

function of some of the carols as Benedicamus substitutes "acceptable to church authorities for use in the Christmas season and on occasions of national prayer or thanksgiving."⁵⁶

His explanation for the considerable number of moral and convival carols, unsuitable for church, is that they "were probably sung at banquets in royal and aristocratic households and at evenings of recreation in colleges and collegiate churches."⁵⁷ Evidence of such entertainment is a line from an account of a royal banquet on Twelfth Night in 1487 which says that "At the Table in the Medell of the Hall sat the Deane and those of the Kings Chapell, which incontynently after the Kings first course sange a Carall."⁵⁸ It is known that the fellows and scholars of certain colleges were allowed, on special feasts and occasions, to remain after supper singing songs and entertaining one another with poems and stories. Probably Nos. 15, 17, and 42, moral carols, and 13A, a drinking song, would be appropriate to such evenings.

Harrison's view is supported by Greene who shows that the processional hymns were not in English but in Latin.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 418.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Leland, Collectanea, iv, p. 237, cited in Music in Medieval Britain, p. 419.

The characteristic processional hymn used in England is a Latin one built closely upon the pattern and in the classical quantitative metre of the one great prototype, the Salve festa dies attributed to Fortunatus, a cento made from a sixth-century poem on Easter. The unlikeness of its stately measures to the characteristic four-beat accentual line of the carol is apparent to anyone who hears it read or sung, and there is no preserved carol which imitates or even suggests its content.

In the processions of lay-folk, which were a feature of many festivals in medieval England and which, of course, were outside the liturgy, the texts which are referred to as being sung are always in Latin. Neither is there any reliable record of a modern custom of singing Christmas carols processional-ly in church which can be traced back to the Middle Ages.⁵⁹

Greene refers to a letter written by Archbishop Cranmer to the King in 1544.⁶⁰ Cranmer is suggesting the use of English translations of the Venite, the Te Deum, and other Latin prose selections in processions, as if for an experiment. Greene adds, "One could hardly ask stronger assurance, on higher authority, that the singing of English words in liturgical processions was unknown before this time."⁶¹

The Rôle of the Franciscans

For centuries after the penetration of England by Christianity, heathen customs persisted among the people.

⁵⁹SEC, p. 45.

⁶⁰See John Edmund Cox, ed., Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, The Parker Society (Cambridge, 1846), p. 412.

⁶¹SEC, p. 46.

The medieval church found it easier to teach and preach than to "eradicate customs of immemorial standing rooted in elementary human instincts."⁶²

The popular songs sung at medieval festivals met with harsh criticism from contemporary churchmen who denounced their immoral lyrics.⁶³ One of the means by which the Church dealt with these worldly songs was to parody them in religious ones. In comparison with sermonizing, Greene comments, "more widespread and more successful was the practice of composing religious songs on the model of the secular pieces which it was hoped to displace. The religious carol . . . is to be regarded as a product of this kind of activity."⁶⁴

A parallel development was the rise of the laude in Italy. Greene's comments are particularly enlightening:

But the greatest flowering of religious popular song took place in thirteenth-century Italy. Towards the end of the preceding century there had sprung up a popular zeal for devotional singing, fostered by the organization of musical fraternities calling themselves laudesi. These guilds were of the greatest service, not merely to religion, but to the cause of vernacular poetry as well; being composed of lay-folk, they naturally preferred to sing in their own tongue rather than in the Latin of the church ritual.

⁶²EEC, p. cxii.

⁶³See a description of some of these songs and the criticism which they provoked in EEC, p. cxvi.

⁶⁴EEC, p. cxvii.

The result was that in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries thousands of laude were composed and sung, varying widely in form and content, but alike in their popular character. Like the English carol, the Italian lauda occupies the middle ground between folk-song and learned lyric; it is the production of an individual author, but directed to an audience without special education or refinement, and patterned upon the songs with which such an audience would already be familiar.⁶⁵

The early history of the lauda is closely associated with the beginnings of the Franciscan order, which fostered the development of religious song in the language of the people. Greene describes this tradition of vernacular religious song as "subordinate, yet complementary, to the friars' principal mission of preaching" and adds that it "gives Franciscanism a claim to consideration as an important force in the shaping of the medieval lyric."⁶⁶

The establishment of the Order of Friars Minor by Francis of Assisi in 1209 gave great impetus to both the current revival of popular religious fervor in Italy and the accompanying production of popular sacred poetry.

Francis himself had the gift of composing songs out of the fullness of his heart, and his youthful acquaintance with the poetry of the worldly troubadours stood him in good stead. It was just after he had composed the beautiful 'Song of Brother Sun' that he gave his disciples the charge of sacred minstrelsy. . . . 'For', he said, 'what are the servants of God if not his minstrels who ought to stir and incite the

⁶⁵Ibid., p. cxx.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. cxxi.

hearts of men to spiritual joy?,'⁶⁷

Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Jacopone da Todi in Italy, Bozon and Tisserant in France, and many more now-forgotten friars composed and sang religious poetry in the languages of the people among whom they circulated. Of their songs Greene writes: "The models were still . . . the worldly and amorous songs of the people; their melodies were used and their words often closely parodied."⁶⁸

Turning to the development of vernacular religious song in England, Greene observes,

There is good reason, therefore, to suspect the hand of the friars in the development of the English carol of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The first Franciscans landed in England in 1224 and speedily attained popularity and influence comparable to those which they enjoyed in Italy.⁶⁹

Robbins describes three stages of growth of the carol:

By the end of the XIII century there were in existence popular secular songs to be sung (and danced to) by the people together. The Franciscan friars took over the form and the music of these songs and substituted

⁶⁷Ibid., p. cxxii. Greene quotes the Speculum Perfectionis, ed. by Paul Sabatier (British Society of Franciscan Studies, vols. xiii, xvii, Manchester, 1928-31), cap. c. The "Song of Brother Sun", with interesting notes, is in Otto Karrer, St. Francis of Assisi, trans. by N. Wydenbruck (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1948), pp. 258-62.

⁶⁸EEC, p. cxxii.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. cxxiii.

religious subject-matter for the secular, at first in Latin, and later, before the middle of the XIV century, in the vernacular. By the XV century, and to an increasing extent throughout that century, these religious adaptations had become so popular with the non-literate laity that their original intention of religious propaganda was lost sight of, and they became as natively popular as the first secular songs which they had been intended to replace. These popular songs are what we know as "carols."⁷⁰

Important to the early history of the carol is the Red Book of Ossory, now in the Episcopal Palace at Kilkenny. Robbins reports that this document was

written by the Franciscan Bishop of Ossory, Richard de Ledrede, from 1316, and continued by his successors, in parts until the XVI century. The contents mainly concern themselves with the Acts of the Synods of Dublin and Ossory from the XIV to the XVI century, and diocesan transactions and ordinances of the government of Ireland in the XIV and XV centuries. On fifteen double-columned pages of the MS. are about 60 Latin songs, among which appear a few scraps of vernacular verse--nine English and two French.⁷¹

The explanation for the inclusion of Latin songs in such a book is provided at the foot of the first page of the songs. Greene has supplied a translation:

Be advised, reader, that the Bishop of Ossory has made these songs for the vicars of the cathedral church, for the priests and his clerks, to be sung on the important holidays and at celebrations, in order that their throats and mouths, consecrated to God, may not be polluted by songs which are lewd, secular, and associated with revelry, and since they are trained singers, let them provide themselves with suitable tunes according to what these pieces require.⁷²

⁷⁰"The Earliest Carols and the Franciscans," Modern Language Notes, LIII (April, 1938), 239.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 239-40.

⁷²SEC, p. 42.

Robbins comments:

The Bishop of Ossory, then, seeing that his clergy had picked up from contact with the folk various "cantilene teatrales turpes" thought that it would be too much to ask them to renounce completely what they enjoyed singing. He therefore wrote pious words to fit the music of these vernacular songs, and in consequence reproduced in Latin the original form of the secular pieces now unremembered. So that his clergy would recognize the tune for the new Latin verses, Ledrede wrote at the head of some of his parodies the outstanding lines of the vernacular song concerned. . . . In many cases where English is given the Latin lines following have quite a different metrical scheme; and so we see that the English is a burden and not the first line(s) of the original poem, and that the tune was set by this burden. By an inspection of these Latin songs, we can ascertain what was the form of their popular prototypes. . . . in all there is a fixed stanza form, and a burden connected with the last line of each stanza by rime, and repeated throughout, but outside the regular metrical scheme of the stanzas.⁷³

By their form, therefore, these Latin songs from the very early fourteenth century may be identified as carols.

Edmund K. Chambers suggests that these verses may have been composed for a particular occasion:

I think the good bishop must have been concerned with the reformation of an abuse prevalent in ecclesiastical foundations under the name of the Feast of Fools. It was common, towards the end of the tenth century, to regard the triduum, which followed the Nativity, as a period in which special honour should be done to the minor clergy of these establishments. . . . And to these tripudia, . . . had been added, by the end of the twelfth century, apparently with less explicit authority, a fourth, variously dated at the Circumcision, the Epiphany, or its octave, in which the same privilege was given to the subdeacons. Their feast was conducted with less sobriety than the others, and often degenerated into a scandalous riot, under the name of the festum fatuorum or the asinarium festum.

⁷³"The Earliest Carols," pp. 240-41.

. . . Richard de Ledrede may very well have been attempting to keep it within the bounds of decency.⁷⁴

The next stage in the development of the carols was their appearance in the language of the people. Latin songs were useful only to the educated, particularly the clergy. Robbins says:

It requires no great stretching of the imagination to believe that if these Latin songs modelled on popular forms proved favourites with the Cathedral clergy, that the good Franciscans turned their Latin into similar songs in the vernacular or made such anew for the use at festivals by the common people in place of their profane "songes of fowle rebawdry and of unclennes."⁷⁵

Some examples of these early songs by the Franciscans have survived to this day.

Some didactic lines are still preserved from the pen of Thomas of Hales, a Franciscan who lived about 1275.⁷⁶ His pious verses were his answer to a nun who had asked him for a love song. Greene prints the poem, and comments:

This poem expressly acknowledges the purpose, the same which will appear later in the religious carol, of turning a liking for song into profitable ways of piety.⁷⁷

The Franciscans are responsible for the Kildare

⁷⁴English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), pp. 82-83.

⁷⁵"The Earliest Carols," p. 242.

⁷⁶The song may be found in Jesus College, Oxford, MS. 29.

⁷⁷EEC, p. cxxiv.

collection of Anglo-Irish poems, dating from about 1300.⁷⁸ Among them is a lullaby "which is certainly to be regarded as a forerunner of the lullaby carol in English."⁷⁹

Robbins believes that this lullaby is a carol, "even though it has no regular burden (for that may have been lost)."⁸⁰

Two carols by the Franciscan William Herebert, English translations of Latin processional hymns, have been mentioned above.⁸¹ Fifteen other English hymns, most of them more or less literal translations of Latin hymns, have been preserved.⁸² Herebert "was a student of the works of Grosseteste⁸³ and Roger Bacon, of the history of England and of his order, and of English religious poetry."⁸⁴

Of Herebert's English hymns, Brown states:

Perhaps the chief claim of Herebert's verses to consideration is their historical importance as an early attempt on the part of the friars to introduce vernacular versions of the hymns into their preaching. There can be little question, I think, that these

⁷⁸This collection is preserved in the British Museum manuscript Harley 913.

⁷⁹Greene prints this poem in EEC, p. cxxv.

⁸⁰"The Earliest Carols," p. 243.

⁸¹Pp. 65-66.

⁸²Herebert's seventeen English hymns compose the last quire of the B. M. Addit. MS. 46919. All but three are printed in Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century.

⁸³Bishop in 1236.

⁸⁴A. G. Little, "The Lamport Fragment of Eccleston and its Connexions," English Historical Review, XLIX (April, 1934), 302.

pieces were designed primarily for pulpit use.⁸⁵

Referring to Brown's statement, Little observes:

Some of these seem more suitable for congregational singing than for the pulpit.⁸⁶

In a commonplace book compiled by the Franciscan John de Grimestone in 1372 is found a large number of English religious poems from the first half of the fourteenth century.⁸⁷ Four carols are included in the collection.⁸⁸ Brown offers some clues towards the identification of Grimestone, and gives these comments:

John Grimestone compiled his book, evidently, as a storehouse of pulpit material. The contents are arranged under 143 topics in alphabetical order, beginning with 'De Abstinencia' and concluding with 'De Veste'. The great bulk of the book is in Latin, but English verses and phrases are scattered throughout. To what extent these verses were composed by Grimestone and to what extent they were merely copied by him we cannot say. The fact that the book contains in many places riming Latin lines with an English paraphrase subjoined strongly suggests that the compiler had a turn for versifying in English.⁸⁹

A manuscript not later than 1350 contains a series of sermon outlines in a Franciscan hand, and, among them,

⁸⁵Religious Lyrics, p. xiv.

⁸⁶"Lampert Fragment," p. 302.

⁸⁷The Grimestone manuscript is the National Library of Scotland, MS. Advocates 18. 7. 21.

⁸⁸Three of these carols are in EEC: Nos. 149a, 155a, and 271. The fourth is printed by Robbins in "The Earliest Carols," p. 244.

⁸⁹Religious Lyrics, pp. xvi-xix.

other English phrases and rhyming lines, and the "earliest Christmas carol extant", beginning "Honnd by honnd we schulle ous take".⁹⁰ Greene suggests that this carol was "probably used by a friar in connexion with his preaching."⁹¹

The manuscript of the Canterbury Franciscan James Ryman, dated 1492, contains 166 English and Latin pieces, of which 119 are English carols.⁹² Greene points out that Ryman is thus responsible for one-quarter of all English carols which have survived from before 1550. His work had little circulation, however; one of his carols, the burden of which is similar to that of No. 26, is included in Christmas carolles newly Inprynted, the little book printed by Richard Kele about 1550. Chambers has given these critical comments about Ryman's work:

Ryman is not an inspired writer, . . . He has some skill in interweaving English and Latin, both in stanza and refrain. Occasionally he exhorts to merriment in song, but he gives little encouragement to it. His approach is devotional rather than didactic. Twenty of his carols are more or less paraphrases of the Te Deum. Most of the others are in honour of the Virgin. And he repeats himself indefinitely.⁹³

Greene, however, shows that Ryman's verses, though

⁹⁰EEC, No. 12. See above, p. 55. The manuscript is now in the Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 26.

⁹¹EEC, p. cxxv.

⁹²Cambridge University Library MS. Ee. 1. 12.

⁹³English Literature, p. 97.

dull, are of value.

Ryman, like Herebert, is to be regarded as a conscientious, rather uninspired Franciscan, engaged in turning religious and profitable matter into vernacular songs in order to appeal to the people. His use of the carol-form is doubtless the result of observation of the popularity of the carol at the time he was writing, and there is every reason to believe that he meant his work to be more than a pious literary exercise--that he designed his poems to be sung by his preaching brothers and their audiences.⁹⁴

John Audelay, author of twenty-six carols, though not a Franciscan, "was enough of a disciple of Francis to compose a carol in his honour, and he was certainly touched by the Franciscan missionary spirit."⁹⁵ "Jon, the blynd Awdlay", as he frequently calls himself, wrote in 1426 and later, probably from Haghmond Abbey in Shropshire, where he was a chaplain in a house of Augustinian canons. Although he has been called a canon and a monk, others think that he was more likely a chantry priest who sought the abbey as a hospital;⁹⁶ it is possible that he may have been a grey friar who had found asylum for his triple disability, blindness, deafness, and sickness, at Haghmond Abbey. Audelay's manuscript, which is not in his own hand, seems to have been dictated to a single scribe, who later

⁹⁴EEC, P. cxxvi.

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. cxxvii-cxxviii; the carol to St. Francis is No. 310 in EEC.

⁹⁶Edmund K. Chambers and Frank Sidgwick, "Fifteenth Century Carols by John Audelay," Modern Language Review, V (October, 1910), 474.

added corrections prescribed by the author.⁹⁷ Many of the poems are autobiographical in nature and frequently mention his physical troubles. Among his carols is a version of No. 26; a line from No. 42 is similar to the burden of another of Audelay's carols.⁹⁸

No doubt the Franciscans influenced other medieval carol writers. Greene suggests that both the spirit and the subject matter of the carols are that of the religious attitude of the friars. He concludes:

In short, the purpose which is obviously that of the carols in general, the presentation of religion and morality in a popular and enjoyable form, was that of no other class of medieval society so much as that of the mendicant friars.⁹⁹

The Popular Nature of the Carols

The word "popular" carries two different connotations. A song may be "popular by origin", of unknown date and authorship, having first appeared in the oral tradition of a group of people having little formal education and frequently living in an isolated area; or, "popular by destination", having been composed by educated

⁹⁷Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 302. See Chambers' comments on Audelay's writings in English Literature, pp. 92-94.

⁹⁸See No. 325 in EEC: "In wele be ware ore thou be woo."

⁹⁹EEC, p. cxxviii.

persons for an audience including all kinds of people.¹⁰⁰

Folk songs are "popular by origin."¹⁰¹ Not written down, but learned by rote, these songs are passed down through the generations by oral transmission. Such songs were the object of concentrated research during the last half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. Following the example of Cecil Sharp, trained musicians went about isolated villages in Great Britain and the United States, recording traditional songs from the lips of singers who had learned them only by hearing them sung. Many of these songs are centuries old; had they not been written down when they were, they would now, in all likelihood, have been lost with the advent of modern machines and means of travel.

The same cannot be said for the carols which have survived in the polyphonic manuscripts of the fifteenth century. These are "popular by destination" only; each is the work of one composer, who, although his name is not known, wrote his music on the basis of skill and ex-

¹⁰⁰The apt expressions "popular by origin" and "popular by destination" originate with R. L. Greene; see "The Carol as Popular Song," Chapter IV of EEC, pp. xciii-cx.

¹⁰¹The Folk-Song Society defines folk-song as "song and melody born of the people and used by the people as an expression of their emotions, and (as in the case of historical ballads) for lyrical narrative." Frank Kidson and Mary Neal, English Folk-Song and Dance (Cambridge: University Press, 1915), p. 10.

perience, to be sung by a trained choir, probably under his own direction. These carols are popular, then, "only in their possible singing by people who would ordinarily attend services in church."¹⁰²

Stevens points out that the polyphonic carol became increasingly cut off from the main stream of the carol tradition as the fifteenth century progressed. Although the carols in the Trinity Roll and most of those in the Selden and Egerton collections may be regarded as reflecting "popular" aspiration, the vastly more complicated carols in the later Ritson manuscript were designed for professionals only: they were "musicians' music."¹⁰³

There are several elements characteristic of folk songs that appear in the manuscript carols. Of these, the most notable is the device of repetition. Most common in folk songs, and, indeed, essential to their preservation, is the recurrence of words or lines at the same point in each verse. This practice is reflected in the burdens and refrains of the manuscript carols. As has been stated,¹⁰⁴ fourteen of the carols in Selden have refrains at the ends of the verses, and others show repetition elsewhere in the carol.

¹⁰²"ProceSSIONal Hymns," p. 575.

¹⁰³"Carol," pp. 81-82.

¹⁰⁴See above, p. 29.

The narrative element is a second characteristic of folk song, especially the ballad type, also to be found in some of the carols. An excellent example is the Agincourt carol, No. 29, which describes the battle and ultimate victory of the English under Henry V. In Selden the narrative element may take the form of relating Biblical events, usually a different incident in each verse. For example, the first verse of No. 23 opens with "As I lay upon a night, methought I saw a seemly sight . . . ;" The second verse describes the Annunciation, the third, the Conception, the fourth, the Crucifixion, and the fifth, the Ascension. The story-telling aspect of No. 27 is so vivid that a visiting minstrel appears to be reporting events surrounding the Nativity, prompted by the often-repeated question of the court, "What tidings bringest thou, messenger?"

The many allusions to folk customs is a third element to be found both in traditional songs and in carols. No. 12A gives a picture of the medieval farmer, including mention of his type of soil, his kinds of seeded grain, the names of his oxen, the rewarding of them with sheaves, and the summer weeding. Greene comments:

There must have been many songs of the plough of true folk-origin in actual work, like spinning and milking songs, for the medieval ploughman would sing at his work for a practical reason, as would the milkmaid or the American cowboy.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵SEC, p. 245.

That the manuscript carols were popularly sung, there is no question. The records of festive occasions in the abbeys and great houses of England are to be found in many manuscripts preserved from medieval times. Greene comments on the place of the carol in medieval life:

The chief habitat of the manuscript carol was the hall, whether of a castle or manor house or of a monastery or cathedral. This was the place above all others where religious and laity, men and women, and, within limits, great and humble most frequently met to form a common audience, and to indulge a taste in lyric entertainment that varied less from group to group than is often thought. Since these gatherings were more concentrated in the twelve days of Christmas than at any other time of year, it is only to be expected that a very large number of carols will deal directly with the Nativity and with the events and personages connected with the other feast days that conclude with the Epiphany. This close connexion with holiday feasting may well be the explanation of the strikingly small number of carols dealing with Easter as a holiday or with the Resurrection. There was less feasting at Eastertide for one excellent practical reason which, obvious as it is, seems rarely to be mentioned: the lack of available provisions for lavish meals at the end of the long winter, when any establishment was lucky if its larder had no shortage of everyday food.¹⁰⁶

Among his interesting descriptions of medieval feasting, Greene includes the following account from Worcester, the probable origin of Selden:

A vivid impression of the kind of feast that an officer of a large monastic house would hold in the holiday season is given by the matter-of-fact accounts of disbursements contained in the journal of William More, last Prior of Worcester, who gave a Christmas feast each year to officials of the city of Worcester.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 27.

Among the most frequent items of expense in the years 1518 to 1532 are malmsey and other wines, minstrels and other entertainers, and singers of carols. It is plain that all of these are regarded as regular components of a large holiday dinner for which a whole ox was bought, and it is equally plain that 'minstrels' and 'singers of carols' are quite separate people, as witness two entries of 1527:

Item for syngyng of carrolls on cristmas day &
to mynstrells 2s. 6d. 16d.

Item to mynstrells & syngers of carralls 12d/4d.

. . . Those who would put churchmen and popular merry song into separate worlds are advised to look further into these good times at Worcester Abbey.¹⁰⁷

The last statement may help to explain the inclusion, in a manuscript containing mainly carols and antiphons to the Virgin, of two drinking songs, Verbum caro factum est, No. 13A, and Tappster, dryngker.¹⁰⁸

Indeed, the generally cheerful tone of the carol is the key to its popularity, whether it be sung in church, court, or procession.

The mixture, completely congruous to a medieval Christian, of devotional sentiment and 'mirth' in its special sense of 'cheerfulness resulting from the knowledge of one's salvation', is one secret of the carol's special nature, and attempts at interpretation of the 'religious' carol which are not based on an understanding and acceptance of this mixture lead to strange results. A grace before and another after meat do not make of a meal a religious service, nor in a Christian household do they impair the merriment

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁰⁸ Tappster, dryngker is printed in modern notation in Ars Nova and the Renaissance, ed. by Dom Anselm Hughes and Gerald Abraham, Vol. III of The New Oxford History of Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 125-26.

and good fellowship of the table.¹⁰⁹

Among the more serious carols of Selden are several which exhibit this happy combination of devotion and mirth. Nos. 25 and 26 are perhaps the best examples.

The appearance of Latin lines in the carols did not hinder their being sung by the unlettered. Greene comments:

While this free use of Latin is rightly taken as a sign of the clerical authorship of most of the carols that we have, we must not assume that it made the carols unintelligible to lay people. There is no reason to suppose that medieval listeners were any less intelligent than modern ones; there is much reason to believe that they were more attentive and blessed with better aural memories. Most churchgoers must have known a great deal of Latin by rote and its meaning by context, even without a day's schooling.¹¹⁰

The question now to be answered is, "Were the medieval carols, such as those in Selden, actually folk songs?" The resemblances already noted between carols and folk songs, the merry spirit of the carols, the anonymity of their composers, and the many records of their being popularly sung, would tend to indicate an affirmative answer. At least one manuscript carol is a folk song: several versions of the "Corpus Christi" carol, the text of which is in a manuscript in Balliol College, Oxford,¹¹¹ were discovered by folk-song collectors during the last half of

¹⁰⁹SEC, pp. 31-32.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 36.

¹¹¹MS. 354, the commonplace book of Richard Hill, a London grocer. The versions of the "Corpus Christi" carol comprise No. 322 in EEC.

the nineteenth century.¹¹² These variants differ widely, and all lack a burden, having a two-part refrain inserted as in a ballad. Greene suggests that "the traditional versions really preserve the original form of the song, which was adapted by the addition of a 'lullay' burden to be sung as a carol."¹¹³

However, there are several reasons to indicate that those carols found in medieval manuscripts are a different genre to the folk song of the people.

Peter Burra's remarks show the necessity of a single inventor for any piece of art:

'Collective composition,' . . . must be a clumsy business. But if an individual has been at work, why is he anonymous? If a single man made the thing, why do we still call it a 'folk' composition? Yet reason and all the authorities point to the single man, whose 'impersonality' nevertheless remains.¹¹⁴

Cecil J. Sharp describes the method of oral transmission as "not merely one by which the folk song lives; it is a process by which it grows and by which it is created." He agrees that the folk song must have had a beginning, but shows how the original song is changed to such an extent, while being passed, unwritten, through the generations, that the first singer would not even recognize

¹¹²See EEC, p. xciv.

¹¹³Ibid., pp. lv-lvi.

¹¹⁴"Carols," Music and Letters, XIV (1933), 250.

it, much less claim its authorship.

The author has disappeared. The most that can be said is that the authorship belongs equally to all those who have taken part in the transmission. Thus, the authorship, originally individual, has become communal. The individual has vanished, and the community has slipped into his shoes.¹¹⁵

Whether folk art or not, the carols must have been composed by individual persons. Now, what illiterate minstrel, or any other uneducated person, could write verses with such sophisticated language, such fine detail in metre and rhyme schemes, and such skilful use of imagery? It may well be that the carol writers were influenced by folk song, as Greene shows in a comparison of some battle folk-tales with the Agincourt carol, No. 29:

This carol, accompanied in two manuscripts with a finished musical setting, is obviously the work of a talented individual. But it is probably the work of a talented individual who had heard folk-songs on other campaigns if not on this same one.¹¹⁶

Manfred F. Bukofzer points out another argument against folk origin from a musical point of view: "Carols were sometimes set to new music in later sources when the old setting was felt to be out of date." He gives the example of I pray you all, No. 15, which appears with the same music in the Selden and Egerton manuscripts but in a

¹¹⁵English Folk Song: Some Conclusions, 4th (rev.) ed. prepared by Maud Karpeles (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), pp. 12-13.

¹¹⁶EEC, p. cv.

different setting in later style in the Ritson manuscript.¹¹⁷

The stylistic evidence is even more convincing. Only a trained hand could copy, let alone compose, the intricate musical settings within which are found over 120 carols.

The conformity with the general style of the fifteenth century, the skill displayed in the counterpoint, the rigid form and its imaginative variants, the melodic types, and the delight in hemiola patterns characterize the polyphonic carol as the product of trained musicians, as art music composed in the popular vein.¹¹⁸

These musical arrangements are not "crude and experimental", as Sir Richard R. Terry says,¹¹⁹ but refined, skilful, and exquisite specimens of the finest musical achievements of their day. The proof of their worth is in hearing them in performance; Terry reflects the artistic judgment of his day when he says

As they stand in the MSS. . . . these carols are of the highest antiquarian and historical value, but only the sheerest preciousity would suggest their public performance in that form, or claim for them any aesthetic appeal to musicians of to-day.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Studies in Medieval & Renaissance Music (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950), p. 170.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 169.

¹¹⁹ A Medieval Carol Book (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., [1931]), p. i.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

On the contrary, the performing of the manuscript carols for a live audience provides not only a proof of the aesthetic satisfaction to be obtained in singing and hearing the carols, but the strongest evidence that the carols were composed, copied, and originally sung by highly trained musicians.¹²¹

Since the circumstances of composition cannot claim folk origin for the carols, what of their method of transmission? Folk music is circulated by word of mouth alone; thus many changes in words and notes appear, and there are, as a result, almost as many variants as there are singers, no two versions agreeing in every respect. Greene shows that this process of constant change is due to the "irresponsibility of folk-singers."¹²²

In contrast, the written versions have been preserved by a "limited group, intelligent and fully aware of the significance of the material."¹²³ That the manuscript carols were not dependent on oral transmission is evident from the close correspondences between those of which several versions are extant. Half of the carols in Selden are found in other medieval manuscripts, and the similar-

¹²¹For an account of a performance of several carols from Selden, see the Appendix.

¹²²EEC, p. cvi.

¹²³Ibid.

ities are more remarkable than the slight variations, indicating that the printed copies were never far out of sight of the singers.

Particularly noticeable are the correspondences of the Latin words.

The generally excellent state of the Latin in different copies of macaronic carols shows that they had not been loosed into truly popular oral tradition, which would have lost no time in reducing passages in the unknown tongue to gibberish, or in replacing them by vernacular lines, probably irrelevant.¹²⁴

Greene gives ample explanation for the variants which occur between the manuscript versions:

The prevailing points of difference between manuscript copies of the carols are substitution of one burden or refrain for another, . . . omissions and substitutions of stanzas, and changes in the order of stanzas. The frequency with which such omission and substitution occur in Middle English poetry of all types testifies to the liberties taken with manuscript material as well as the accidents which often befell it. Pieces intended for singing, like the carols, were doubtless intentionally shortened in some cases. On the other hand, to no form of poetry could verses be added more easily than to the carol. . . .

The method of transmission of these carol-texts is thus midway between the uncontrolled oral tradition of folk-song and the exclusively manuscript tradition of long and learned works. The repeated performance of a carol would involve its being committed to memory, and many people who never set pen to parchment doubtless learned some of these carols by word of mouth. But the same pieces, unlike folk-song, were also current in manuscript copies, against which singers who were not illiterate folk-singers could check their repertory. This is exactly the type of transmission usual to song which is popular by destination.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. cvi-cvii.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. cvii-cviii.

What, then, of the many collections of so-called "carols" published, with and without music, during the nineteenth and, to a somewhat less extent, twentieth centuries? Are these actually carols? Are they the products of trained composers? Have they been preserved in their original setting in manuscripts or handed down by oral transmission? If Greene's definition of a carol is adhered to, then only those songs with uniform verses and a recurrent burden may be considered carols; but the label "carol" has been used more loosely since medieval times. In the more recent collections may be found a variety of types: folk songs, only recently written down, the products of a tradition now buried in history; medieval carols preserved in manuscripts still extant; arrangements of songs whose authors and composers may or may not be known; and "modern" pieces newly written by known composers for their own age.

Both folk songs and carols have received bold editorial treatment in many of these carol collections. To some traditional songs having only melodies have been added extra vocal parts and accompaniment by the editors of The Cowley Carol Book¹²⁶ and The English Carol Book,¹²⁷

¹²⁶Compiled and arranged by George Ratcliffe Woodward (rev. ed.; London and Oxford: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1927).

¹²⁷Martin Shaw and Percy Dearmer, eds. (London and Oxford: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1928).

to name but two. A song which appears in many collections in a variety of both textual and musical settings is the so-called Cherry Tree Carol, beginning "Joseph was an old man."

Some of the manuscript carols have been treated in similar fashion: W. S. Rockstro has unashamedly added vocal parts to J. A. Fuller Maitland's transcriptions of the carols in the Trinity Roll;¹²⁸ G. R. Woodward has taken one part from Make we joy now in the fest from Selden and set it for four vocal parts;¹²⁹ and Edmondstone Duncan has arranged for solo voice with piano accompaniment What tidings bringest thou from Selden, noting, as his only acknowledgement, "Air by John Dunstable."¹³⁰

The Oxford Book of Carols is a heterogeneous collection of carols and songs for all seasons.¹³¹ Among folk songs, legends, ditties, national songs, manuscript carols, and compositions of known composers are four carols

¹²⁸English Carols of the Fifteenth Century (London: The Leadenhall Press, [1891]). Bukofzer calls these "pitiful arrangements" in Studies, p. 171, n. 98.

¹²⁹The Cowley Carol Book, No. 27.

¹³⁰Carols & Songs of Christmastide (London: Augener Ltd., n.d., pp. 16-17).

¹³¹Edited by Percy Dearmer, R. Vaughan Williams, and Martin Shaw (London: Oxford University Press, 1945).

from Selden.¹³² Three of these are freely arranged by Martin Shaw for four vocal parts, using the tenor from the manuscript as the soprano. The fourth, Nowell: out of your sleep, is an entirely new setting of the words from the manuscript.

Sir Richard Terry, with similar abandon, has taken the tenor lines only of about two-thirds of the carols in Selden, and, using these lines as the soprano, has added parts for alto, tenor, and bass, explaining his actions thus:

Their [the carols'] unsuitability for performance in their original form is not due to their antiquity; the folk-tunes on which they are founded are of even earlier date but are nevertheless grateful to modern ears. It is merely that the folk-tunes of the carols are a finished artistic product, while the crude counterpoint which is woven around them is the first fumbling attempts in search of a technique which did not attain perfection until the sixteenth century.

I have therefore taken the folk-melodies out of their polyphonic setting and added Alto, Tenor and Bass parts to them--modal in character and contrapuntal (rather than 'harmonic') in design.

My settings are therefore in no sense adaptations. I have merely done what these anonymous contrapuntists did--taken the melodies of the carols and added other vocal parts to them. The only difference is that the early fifteenth century polyphonists were pioneers, embarking (so to speak) on an uncharted sea, while we of to-day have the entire literature of the polyphonic period (from Dunstable and Josquin to Palestrina and Byrd) for our guidance.

. . . In the MSS. to which I have gone for this present collection we have evidence that the tunes associated with the carols were sufficiently well known for the fifteenth century contrapuntists to take them as canti fermi for their more elaborate settings.

¹³²Nos. 16, 25, 26, and 27.

That they should have done so is fortunate, as it has meant the preservation in MSS. of many noble tunes which might have perished if handed down (like those which have disappeared) by oral tradition.¹³³

The illogical reasoning of the last statement points out the fallacy of Terry's original premise that the manuscript carols are merely poor harmonizations of folk tunes. Terry was presumptuous in offering his arrangements as improvements over the manuscript settings; nevertheless, as Stevens has said,

It rests with the listener to decide which are the better--the emasculated, nerveless, sugary versions of the populariser, or the vigorous originals in which warmth of feeling never floods over into sentimentality.¹³⁴

The ill-treatment to which the manuscript carols have been subjected in the hands of later editors could be charitably attributed to an incomplete perception of their structural perfection rather than contempt for their musical style. Denis Stevens has pointed out:

It is a great mistake to think of the music of previous ages as tame, lame, or shameful. Many lost subtleties have only recently come to be appreciated again, after sleeping on through countless editions whose unreduced

¹³³A Medieval Carol Book, pp. i-iii. Bukofzer soundly refutes Terry's arguments, one by one, in a delightfully thorough manner in Studies, pp. 170-73. Terry's statement quoted above is described by Bukofzer as "probably unique in its succinct and categorical statement of common fallacies and in its sincere belief in wrong premises that lead to unacceptable consequences."

¹³⁴"Medieval English Carols," p. 1049.

note-values give more the impression of a monumental graveyard than a monument of music.¹³⁵

In Mediaeval Carols,¹³⁶ John Stevens' editorial procedure has been to reduce by four the values of the archaic longs, breves, and semibreves, to insert modern clefs and time signatures, and to modernize the Middle English words in spelling but not in form. This represents "a happy combination of scholarly and practical considerations":¹³⁷ while remaining faithful, in the most minute detail, to the original settings in the manuscript, Stevens has presented the carols in a form well adapted to the use of modern performers.

¹³⁵"English Music in the Fifteenth Century," The Listener, May 3, 1951, p. 732.

¹³⁶Vol. IV of Musica Britannica (2nd, rev. ed.; The Royal Musical Association; London: Stainer and Bell Ltd, 1958).

¹³⁷Manfred F. Bukofzer, "Review of Mediaeval Carols, ed. by John Stevens," Journal of the American Musicological Society, VII (Spring, 1954), 65.

CHAPTER IV

MUSICAL STYLE

The medieval carol is marked by a unique musical style that distinguishes it from other music of the time. The concise, strongly accented text is coupled with a freshness of rhythm and melody to give the carol its unmistakable lilt and popular flavor. Because the musical means are stereotyped, all the carols sound somewhat similar; yet, each has an individual character while conforming to a consistency of musical style.

Fifteenth-century carols are found invariably in triple metre. About two-thirds of the carols in the manuscript Arch Selden B26¹ are written in imperfect time with perfect prolation C .² John Stevens, in Mediaeval Carols, has transcribed these in 3/8 time;³ Manfred F. Bukofzer recommends transcription in 6/8 time, or 6/4 in cases where the florid upper line would otherwise call for

¹Hereinafter referred to as Selden.

²Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 12A, and 13A.

³Vol. IV of Musica Britannica (2nd, rev. ed.; The Royal Musical Association; London: Stainer and Bell Ltd., 1958).

thirty-second notes.⁴ The remaining third are in perfect time with imperfect prolation \bigcirc , transcribed in $3/4$ time.⁵ One carol is excepted: it is written in perfect time with perfect prolation \odot and transcribed in $9/8$ time.⁶

The carols in perfect time appear mainly towards the end of Selden; this fact indicates an historical evolution of the carol through the fifteenth century. Those in the early Trinity Roll are predominantly in imperfect time with major prolation; perfect time is seen more frequently towards the end of both the Selden and Egerton collections; and in the later Ritson manuscript, perfect time is used in all the carols.⁷

The significance of this important change, which also occurs in continental music of the same time, can be seen in a comparison of the terse and vigorous carols of the Trinity collection with the sedate and even turgid carols of the Ritson Manuscript. The solemnity of many later carols is in part due to the greater rhythmic complexities encouraged by perfect time.⁸

⁴Studies in Medieval & Renaissance Music (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1950), p. 164, n. 82.

⁵Nos. 19, 23, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, and 42.

⁶No. 25.

⁷The single example of duple time in extant fifteenth-century carols occurs in the chorus of No. 86 from the Ritson manuscript.



⁸John Stevens, "Carol," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. by Eric Blom (5th ed.; London: MacMillan & Co Ltd., New York: St Martin's Press, 1954), II, 80.

Bukofzer points out:

The law of the senaria, the constant hovering between $6/8$ and $3/4$, governs all carols regardless of the meter they adopt. However, it should not be thought that the selection of meter is immaterial. It is, on the contrary, a factor of historical significance which throws some light on the development of carol music.⁹

He shows the gradual evolution in continental composition during the fifteenth century from major prolation to perfect time, "more straightforward and stable than the ambiguous $6/8$."¹⁰ The reflection of this trend in the English carol is a guide to the relative age of the manuscripts, placing the Trinity Roll early in the fifteenth century and the Ritson manuscript towards the end, with the Selden and Egerton collections between.

However, Stevens points out that in the middle of the century the choice of metre could not have been thought a matter of decisive importance to the composer, since, for example, the Agincourt carol, in imperfect time in the Trinity Roll, appears in Selden in perfect time.¹¹

A persistent characteristic of the carols is the hemiola, which occurs in every carol in Selden. This is an infinitely varied cross rhythm which results from the combinations of the patterns  and .

⁹Studies, p. 165.

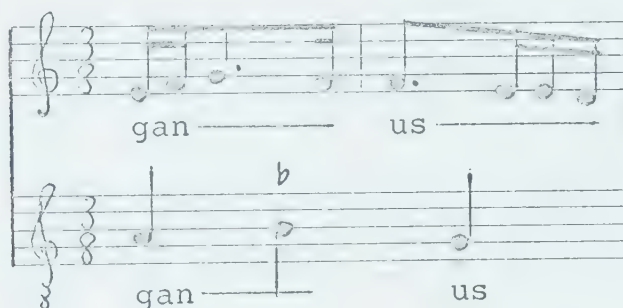
¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹"Carol," p. 80.

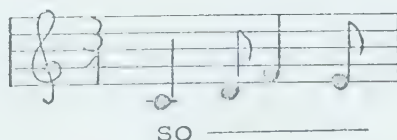
The device is, indeed, so typical that the carol might well be called hemiola music pure and simple. There is literally not a single carol in the collection that does not have it.¹²

Stevens shows that the cross rhythms are of two kinds.¹³ The first is usually expressed by coloration and transcribed as in the lowest voice in Example 3. The second does not require coloration and appears in transcription as in Example 4.

Ex. 3. No. 16, mm. 17-18.



Ex. 4. No. 36, m. 26.



The hemiola occurs in many forms and in a great

¹²Studies, p. 165.

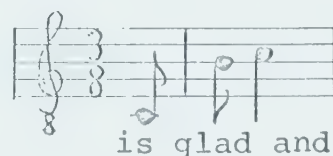
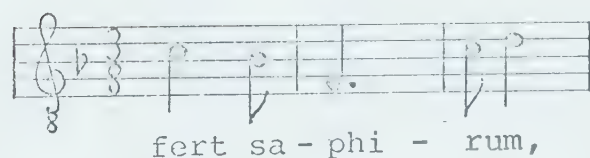
¹³"Carol," p. 80.

variety of combinations throughout Selden. In No. 19, Of a rose sing we, and No. 39, Laus, honor, virtus, gloria, to cite only two examples, cross rhythms occur in nearly every measure.¹⁴

The melodies of the carols do not present a smooth vocal line nor an easily singable tune. They have an angular nature due to the persistent use of disjunct motion between structurally important notes of the melody. Wide melodic intervals occur frequently in the carols, as seen in Example 5. Quite common are leaps of (a) a fourth and a fifth, (b) a seventh, and (c) an octave. As in (d), the triad is frequently outlined, often continuing, as in (e), in the same direction to the interval of a sixth. The use of progressions outlining the seventh, as in (f), contributes to the modal flavor of the music.

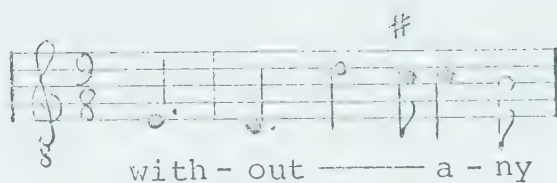
Ex. 5.

(a) No. 37, mm. 41-43. (b) No. 18, mm. 21-22.



¹⁴Otto Gombosi comments on the two mensurations used in Selden and the problems of transcribing the hemiola in each with regard to barring and cadences in his "Review of Mediaeval Carols, edited by John Stevens," Renaissance News, VI (Spring, 1953), 7-10.

(c) No. 25, mm. 17-18.



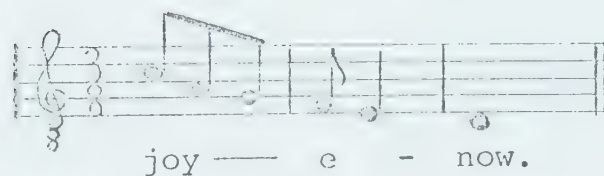
(d) No. 19, mm. 1-2.



(e) No. 13A, mm. 26-29.



(f) No. 12A, mm. 49-51.



At the same time the melodies often appear smooth due to the frequent reiteration of the same note which may be covered up by the use of (a) turns or (b) melodic

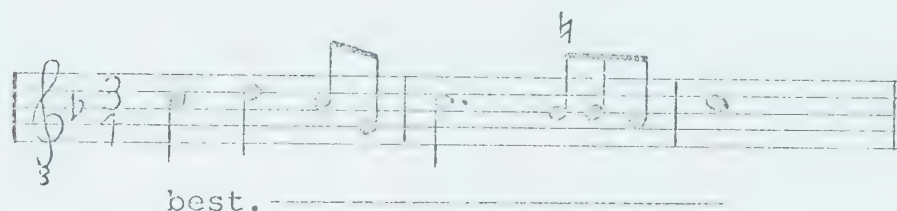
patterns using the first and second notes above and below, as seen in Example 6.

Ex. 6.

(a) No. 41, mm. 11-12.



(b) No. 42, mm. 6-8.



Bukofzer comments:

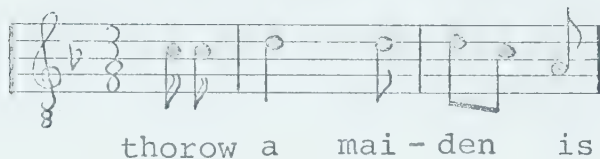
The melodies sound fresh but at the same time very much alike, so that if one knows a dozen the rest sound somehow familiar. The characteristic angularity would be much more noticeable were it not for the driving rhythm that propels the melody and gives it its springy, masculine quality. The interaction between angular design and rhythmic vigor is the secret of the popular style of the carol.¹⁵

The melodic lines are divided into phrases of extremely variable length. They always coincide with the lines of the text, showing the close relations between

¹⁵Studies, p. 169.

music and lyric. However, the natural accents of the words are not reflected in the music, as may be seen in Example 7. "In the earlier and simpler carols . . . the

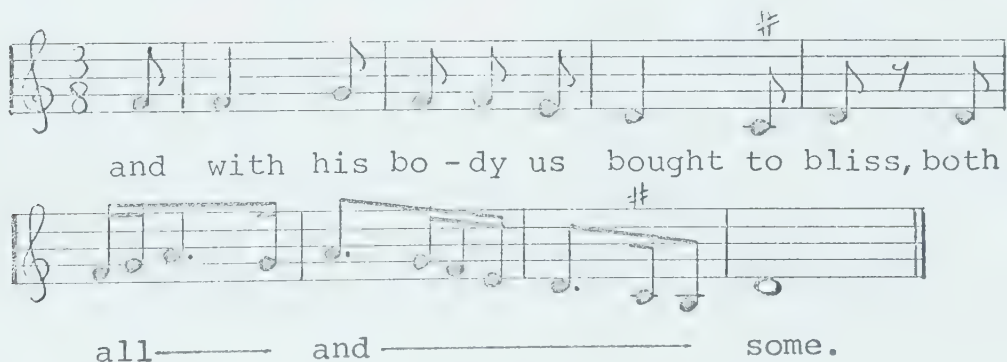
Ex. 7. No. 26, mm. 16-18.



words were . . . forced, without much regard for natural stress into the metrical straitjacket of the music."¹⁶

Although the melodic lines tend to be more syllabic at the outset of the phrases, they often become more florid and melismatic towards the ends of the phrases, as seen in Example 8.

Ex. 8. No. 16, mm. 19-27.



The texts of the later carols in Selden receive a somewhat different treatment:

¹⁶"Carol," p. 81.

Carols of the middle period, especially the sort that would be written in perfect time, show a slightly different treatment which may best be described as "metrical". The first five or six syllables are generally set to so many notes, but after that the syllables, again regardless of "just accent", are set each to a strong beat in the music; this usually coincides with the beginning of a bar in the transcription. In a long phrase the later syllables may be spaced at intervals of two bars or more. . . . This use of words is exactly what one would expect in the carol. Each syllable seems to administer, as it were, a little punch to the melodic line.¹⁷

The carols in Selden are written mainly with two-part burdens and verses, and three-part choruses. The exceptions are No. 25, where the burden is in unison and the verse is in three parts; No. 27, in which the chorus is in only two parts; No. 31, with its three-part burden; and No. 42, with a unison burden.

The question of which voice carries the principal melody has been given a variety of answers. Clearly untenable is the position taken by editors such as Sir Richard R. Terry¹⁸ and Martin Shaw¹⁹ who, assuming that the lowest vocal line was the "tune", placed it as the soprano in their own original arrangements, and created new harmonic parts for alto, tenor, and bass voices

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸A Medieval Carol Book (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., [1931]).

¹⁹The Oxford Book of Carols (London: Oxford University Press, 1945).

below.²⁰

Rossell Hope Robbins states: "No one voice carries the melody, although the tenor (the lowest voice) generally has the strongest part."²¹ On the other hand, the tendency towards more disjunct motion in the lower part of two-voice writing in, for example, Nos. 16, 17, and 33 suggests that the upper part, with its smoother line, would be more easily learned and remembered.

Bukofzer suggests that the principal voice "often lies below, as though the tradition of English discant were still alive."²² Elsewhere he states, "On the whole the lowest voice seems to have the predominance as a rule, but sometimes the middle or the highest voice leads."²³ However, in his Studies he speaks of the "essential equivalence of voices, even if one of them may be more characteristic. . . . the parts were complementary and were composed for each other."²⁴ In some carols, he points out,

²⁰See discussion of this point in Chapter III, pp. 97-98.

²¹Early English Christmas Carols (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 8.

²²"Popular Polyphony in the Middle Ages," The Musical Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1940), 49.

²³Ars Nova and the Renaissance, ed. by Dom Anselm Hughes and Gerald Abraham, Vol. III of The New Oxford History of Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 123.

²⁴p. 168.

the parts are rhythmically differentiated by the upper voice being written in shorter note values than the other voices, "plainly conceived as a florid counterpoint to the tenor, which stands out as a melody of independence and 'character'."²⁵ This kind of writing, though not common in Selden, may be seen in the verse of No. 16 and the burden of No. 18.

There is a remarkable use of choral unison writing in several of the carols in Selden. The first phrase of the burdens of Nos. 23 and 29 and the entire burdens of Nos. 25 and 42 are to be sung by the group in unison, in contrast to the solo polyphony of the verses. A distinction should be made between the unison beginnings of Nos. 23 and 29 in which both parts are notated identically on two staves, and those of Nos. 25 and 42 where the burdens are written only once.²⁶

Bukofzer considers these unison burdens "primitive" in their close relationship to the dance. "These must be recognized as survivals of the early stage of the carol when choral polyphony had not yet been evolved and the music was still danced to, or at least was quite close to

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Richard L. Greene, probably in error, refers to the unison burden of No. 42 as "solo" in The Early English Carols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. lvii. This is pointed out by Bukofzer (Studies, p. 166) who later mentions "a burden for one solo voice" in regard to the same carol, apparently contradicting himself (Ars Nova, p. 123).

the dance."²⁷ Andrew Hughes notes the unison opening of the Agincourt carol but fails to observe that of No. 23.

He comments from an historical point of view:

Unisons at the beginning may of course serve the same purpose as the intonation of chant: the setting of pitch--in this case before branching out into the different pitches of polyphony. But there may be an additional implication: by means of the occasional unison passage individual singers were gradually accustomed to the idea of more than one singer per part.²⁸

Unison passages occur also in the verses of three carols in Selden, where identical parts are written out on two staves.²⁹ Bukofzer calls this interruption of polyphonic compositions by unison passages "a very curious English practice," and points out that such writing occurs also in a "retrospective" manuscript, Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 1236.³⁰

Apart from these exceptional unison passages, the carols in Selden are written in a consonant style with the use of thirds, fifths, sixths, and tenths as harmonic intervals; the fourth is used very rarely. Dissonances occur only as suspensions, passing notes, and ornamental

²⁷Studies, p. 166.

²⁸"Mensural Polyphony for Choir in 15th-Century England," Journal of the American Musicological Society, XIX (Fall, 1966), 355.

²⁹Nos. 23, 30, and 41.

³⁰"The Beginnings of Polyphonic Choral Music," Papers of the American Musicological Society, Annual Meeting, 1940, p. 33.

notes. The third part, when present, has the character of an added part; the outer voices are the essential ones and are harmonically complete without it. "It seems that the carol composers of the fifteenth century were really at home only in the two-voice medium."³¹

The two-part carols Bukofzer describes as having the nature of the "gymel". Deriving its name from the Latin cantus gemellus, twin song, the gymel is a composition for two voices. On the fifteenth-century use of the word, Bukofzer says:

One may perhaps deduce that, in popular music, the existence of two voices in contrast to the single voice more usual in folk music, is generally regarded as something quite uncommon. In the gymels the principal melody is notated as the lower one, the other voice singing in thirds with it, at times above it, at times actually below. The crossing of voices, which takes place by contrary and conjunct motion through the unison, is an important characteristic of gymel.³²

Although parallel motion is infrequent in the carols in Selden, there are some notable examples of it, such as the three-part sections of No. 30 and the lovely duet on the verse of No. 37.

Catherine K. Miller regards the carol as a type

³¹Studies, p. 167.

³²"Popular Polyphony," p. 36. For an earlier essay by Bukofzer on the same subject, see "The Gymel, The Earliest Form of English Polyphony," Music and Letters, XVI (March, 1935), 77-84.

of conductus, because it exhibits the following stylistic traits: note-against-note writing, a single text which appears with the lowest voice, the tendency for all voices to end phrases together, the absence of a cantus firmus, and the processional or festal nature of the texts.³³

Stevens suggests that in the two-part carols, a third part may have been improvised in "English descant" style, particularly in the passages of parallel sixths.³⁴ On the basis of this theory he has added a middle part, in small notes, to some of the two-part carols in Mediaeval Carols.³⁵ He interprets the direction "Faburdon" in No. 95 as an indication that parts were in fact improvised.

Catherine Miller adds:

The direction 'Faburden' indicates that the music of the . . . 'burden' may be sung by three voices as well as two. The third part, to be added extemporaneously, would fill out the section in 'faburden' (or 'faux-bourdon') style.³⁶

Bukofzer disagrees with this interpretation on the basis of the fact that the two voices of the burden move in free

³³"The Early English Carol," Renaissance News, III (Winter, 1950), 64.

³⁴"Carol," p. 80.

³⁵In his Editorial Note (p. xvi) he explains: "An additional part for 'fa-burdening', printed small, is occasionally supplied, in accordance with the improvisatory practice of the period."

³⁶"The Early English Carol," p. 63.

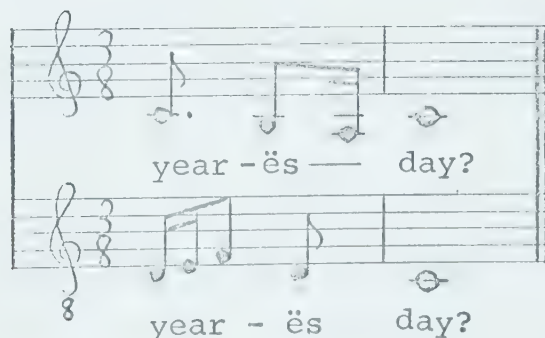
counterpoint and a third voice at the fourth below the treble would cause a series of dissonances. He suggests that the words Te eternum, which are written without music in the manuscript directly below the direction Faburdon, should be improvised and chanted in fauxbourdon fashion.³⁷

Imitation in the carols is rare, consistent with its general absence in music of the period.

There are two types of cadences in the carols in Selden. In both, the outside parts move to the octave or unison; if a middle part is present it supplies the fifth. As seen in Example 9, the two cadences are (a) the ornamental sixth with its typical leap to the final from the third below, and (b) the leading note cadence in which the final is reached directly by half-step.

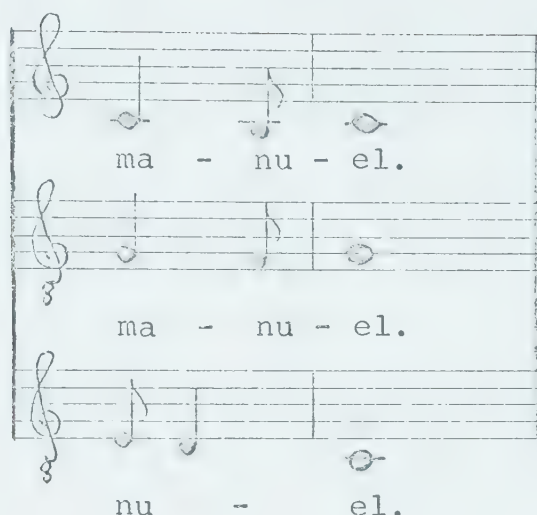
Ex. 9.

(a) No. 27, mm. 8-9.



³⁷"Fauxbourdon Revisited," The Musical Quarterly, XXXVIII (January, 1952), 32-33.

(b) No. 38, mm. 20-21.



There are slightly more of the second type of cadence in Selden, and these tend to occur in greater number towards the latter part of the collection, reflecting the trend throughout the century away from the older ornamental-sixth cadence towards the newer leading-note progression.

For example, certain chansons of the Burgundian school, originally composed with the ornamental sixth and thus recorded in the oldest sources, often appear in later versions with the more recent form of cadence. This modernization is due to scribes who felt free to bring the music up to date.³⁸

The modern V-I cadence, does not, of course, appear in Selden; Bukofzer, however, reports a few V-I progressions in the Egerton manuscript as intermediate, never

³⁸Studies, p. 167.

final cadences.³⁹

In Stevens' brief examination of the modes used in the carols, he notes that the most striking single fact is the popularity of the C (Ionian) mode, modus lascivus, which is used in half of the carols in his edition of Mediaeval Carols.⁴⁰ Thirteen of the thirty carols in Selden close on C,⁴¹ and an additional four on F in the transposed form of the Ionian mode.⁴² The Dorian mode is next most popular, used in seven carols in Selden.⁴³ The Aeolian mode occurs in three carols,⁴⁴ and the Mixolydian in three.⁴⁵

The chief dynamic device in the carols is the contrast in numbers of performers: the antiphonal singing between the soloists on the verses and the full choir on the burdens and choruses is an attractive element in the performance of the carols.

³⁹Measures 27-29 in No. 40 and 35-36 in No. 42 could perhaps be described as V-I progressions.

⁴⁰"Carol," p. 80.

⁴¹Nos. 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, 30, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, and 13A.

⁴²Nos. 15, 26, 34, and 37.

⁴³Nos. 16, 28, 29, and 35 occur in the untransposed form of the Dorian mode, and Nos. 32, 33, and 40 in its transposed form.

⁴⁴Nos. 31 and 12A in the rare untransposed form, and No. 22 transposed.

⁴⁵Nos. 17, 21, and 25.

Consideration of musical style with respect to performance prompts the questions: how many singers are needed, what range of voices, and, what use, if any, should be made of instruments?

Regarding the first of these, Bukofzer notes:

The size of the choir for polyphonic performances must not be overestimated. . . . Usually we have to assume two or three singers for one part.⁴⁶

Stevens suggests:

Each carol demands for its proper performance a choir of perhaps nine or ten adult male voices with especial strength in the middle register. Such a chapel as the fifth Earl of Northumberland had in Yorkshire would exactly meet this requirement: the establishment varied, but a typical entry in the Household Book refers to wages for 2 basses, 2 tenors and 6 countertenors.⁴⁷

The fact that the range of the upper parts in many of the carols is too high to be sung by a modern tenor and too low for an unchanged boy's voice points to the countertenor as the voice probably used in medieval times and most effective in performance today.

The verse in particular seems to be designed to enable countertenor and tenor to display their versatility. The possibility that the pieces were transposed must always be reckoned with, but the fact that experienced male altos to-day find the upper parts within their compass suggests that our modern pitch may be used without danger of falsifying the original texture.⁴⁸

⁴⁶"The Beginnings of Polyphonic Choral Music," pp. 33-34.

⁴⁷"Carol," p. 82.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 81-82.

The use of instruments in English music of the fifteenth century is a subject on which few facts are known. The style of writing in the carols is not unsuitable to instruments; on the contrary, such characteristics as the wide range, abrupt changes in register, frequent wide melodic leaps, and few rests may point to the use of instruments.

Occasional mentions of instruments appear in contemporary continental manuscripts of sacred music. An Ave Virgo by Franchois, a contemporary of Dufay, opens with an independent introduction of which the lowest part is designated Trumpetta Introitus, showing that this part is to be played by a slide-trumpet.⁴⁹ The same instrument is named to be used in the contratenor of a mass by Grossin, who was clerc de matines at Notre Dame in 1421.⁵⁰ Reese points out that the cantus firmus, when placed in the next-to-the-bottom voice in four-part masses of this period, may quite possibly have been played on some instrument such as the slide-trumpet, either alone or doubling the singers.⁵¹ However, actual mention of any in-

⁴⁹Gustave Reese, Music in the Renaissance (Rev. ed.; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1959), p. 42. The slide-trumpet, sometimes called sackbut, is a type of trombone, dating from the fourteenth century.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 43.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 67.

strument in medieval manuscripts is rare.

It was not usual to "orchestrate" to the extent of requiring particular instruments for specific parts. As in the past, in most music, sacred or secular, a player apparently executed any part within the scope of his instrument, and did not hesitate to double a singing voice or substitute for it. The doubling instruments--the viol, harp, lute, sackbut, cromorne, and portative organ were likely choices--undoubtedly often continued during interludes, etc., while the singers paused.⁵²

No such interludes are specifically indicated in the carols in Selden; however, it is not unreasonable that occasional verses or burdens may have been played rather than sung. That the lowest vocal line is usually the only one to be supplied with text does not by itself indicate that the other parts were instrumental, but it does suggest one way of performing, in particular, the verses.

The fact that instruments were neither specifically designated nor notated in the manuscripts does not mean that they were not intended to be used; although, as Gwynn S. McPeck says, instruments are not essential to the full sound of the music,⁵³ it is likely that they were always employed in the performance of fifteenth-century polyphonic vocal music, doubling the voices at a range convenient to the instrument. Performers likely used whatever melody and percussion instruments were available to them, and

⁵²Ibid., p. 36.

⁵³The British Museum Manuscript Egerton 3307 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 21.

varied the combinations at will.

A less popular view is held by James W. McKinnon:

When instruments were employed in church during the late middle ages, their use roughly paralleled that of the organ. That is, they did not accompany singing, particularly choral singing, nor did they double voice parts. Rather they might have played in alternation with the singing, for example, within a Te Deum; they might have played before or after liturgical functions on solemn occasions, and they might have joined the organ and bells at the elevation of the Mass. In a word they mixed with sacred vocal music somewhat in the manner of oil and water; a genuine integration would have to await the time of the Gabrieli.⁵⁴

Bukofzer offers the following suggestions to performers of the polyphonic carols:

Singing parts could be doubled or replaced by instruments. . . . the many possible instrumental and vocal combinations add brilliance to the music and are a natural means of giving variety to the numerous repeats.⁵⁵

The nature and amount of instrumental color depends upon the text, musical range, texture, tempo, and circumstances of performance. An intimate, simple work such as the cantilena Ecce, quod natura, No. 37, needs little, if any accompaniment; the jovial nature of Goday, my lord, No. 18, would be enhanced with the addition of instrumental color; and a large-scale, festive carol such

⁵⁴"Musical Instruments in Medieval Psalm Commentaries and Psalters," Journal of the American Musicological Society, XXI (Spring, 1968), 19-20.

⁵⁵"Review of Mediaeval Carols, ed. by John Stevens," Journal of the American Musicological Society, VII (Spring, 1954), 63.

as Deo gracias, Anglia, No. 29, demands a full range of melodic and percussion instrumental participation.

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APPENDIX

A PERFORMANCE OF
MEDIEVAL MUSIC AND DRAMA

APPENDIX

A PERFORMANCE OF MEDIEVAL MUSIC AND DRAMA

A performance of eleven carols from the manuscript Arch Selden B26 was given at the University of Alberta on July 29, 1970. In addition to the carols, the program included two other English songs from medieval manuscripts, some instrumental dances, and a reading of the fifteenth-century morality play, Everyman. The program was prepared and directed by the writer.

The choir consisted of twelve singers. The instrumental ensemble included recorders (sopranino, descant, alto, tenor, and bass), musette, soprano Krummhorn, Zink, oboe, flute, viol da gamba, drums, bells, tambourines, cymbals, and triangle.

Carol burdens were sung by the group, and verses by one, two, or three soloists, one voice to a part. The melody instruments, where used, doubled the voice parts, or in a few cases played a voice part in a two-part verse where one soloist sang the other part. Percussion parts were improvised by the singers mainly on the burdens of the carols.

A copy of the printed program may be seen on

page 133. A tape recording of the concert is housed in the Cameron Library, University of Alberta.

THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
of
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

presents a program of

MEDIEVAL MUSIC AND DRAMA

THREE CAROLS Selden Manuscript B26

Make we joy now in this fest
Ecce, quod natura
What tidings bringest thou?

INSTRUMENTAL DANCES 13th Century

Estampie: English Dance
Two-part Ductia

THREE CAROLS Selden Manuscript B26

Goday, my lord
Ave Maria
Nowell, nowell

MUSIC FOR RECORDER ENSEMBLE

EVERYMAN, A Reading of an Abridged Version 15th Century

INTERMISSION

INSTRUMENTAL PROCESSION from
THE PLAY OF DANIEL 13th Century

FOUR SECULAR SONGS

Sumer is icumen in English (c. 1310)
The Plough Carol Selden Manuscript B26
O Rosa Bella John Dunstable
Abide, I hope it be the best Selden Manuscript B26

INSTRUMENTAL DANCES

Danse Royale 13th Century
Lamento di Tristan 14th Century

THREE CAROLS Selden Manuscript B26

Nowell sing we both all and some
Hail, Mary, full of grace
The Agincourt Carol: Deo gracias, Anglia

Wednesday, July 29, 1970
8:30 p.m.

Faculty Lounge
Henry Marshall Tory Building

SINGERS

Betty Bowen-Wing
Ann Castle
Arthur Crighton
Charles Dool
Sheila Dool
Sheila Gynane
June Hunt
James Mann
Walter Meyer
John New
Arthur Newman
Arthur Querengesser

CAST OF EVERYMAN in order of speaking

Messenger	June Hunt
God	Bill Meilen
Death	John Rivet
Everyman	Neil Freeman
Good Deeds	Sheila Gynane
Knowledge	Mary Glenfield
Confession	Bill Meilen
Beauty	Catherine Ross
Strength	John Rivet
Discretion	Bill Meilen
Five Wits	June Hunt

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Barbara Gill, percussion
Walter Meyer, viol da gamba
Jean Page, flute
Catherine Ross, recorder
Allen Simonson, Krummhorn, musette
Rhoda Witherly, recorder
Peter Witherly, trumpet, Zink

RECORDER ENSEMBLE

Rhuanedd Meilen
Jean Page
Joan Sylvester
Mary Wild

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Doreen Wakefield

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